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THE PRINCIPLES

DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM.

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DE HERGHEDE RIJKS

DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM,

A POEM

BY THOMAS OCCLEVE,

WRITTEN IN THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.

EDITED FOR THE FIRST TIME

BY THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ. M.A., F.S.A., ETC.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE
(ACADEMIE DES INSCRIPTIONS ET BELLES LETTRES).

[Publications]

PRINTED FOR THE

Roxburghe Club.

LONDON:

J. B. NICHOLS AND SONS, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

MDCCCLX.

DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM

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BY THOMAS AQUINAS

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

PRINTED BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

BY JAMES WRIGHT & CO. LTD.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM.



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PREFACE.

THOMAS OCCLEVE is one of those writers of whose history we know nothing further than that which is found in his writings; but fortunately in this case many of these are of a personal character. A number of his shorter poems were contained in a manuscript which, after passing through the hands of Askew, of George Mason, and of Heber, was sold when Heber's library was dispersed by public auction. Mason published a selection from it in a quarto volume printed in 1796.* In the first of these poems, which is entitled in the MS. *La male regle de T. Hoccleve*, he tells us how he had impoverished himself and fallen into distress by his wasteful living. Addressing riches as a thing with which he was then little acquainted, but of which he had enjoyed the advantage in his youth, he goes on to say:—

My freendes seiden unto me ful ofte
My misreule me cause wolde a fit,
And redden me in esy wyse and softe
A lyte and lyte to withdrawen it;
But that nat mighte synke into my wit,
So was the lust yrooted in myn herte:
And now I am so rype unto my pit,
That scarsely I may it nat asterte.

* Poems by Thomas Hoccleve, never before printed: selected from a MS. in the possession of George Mason; with a Preface, Notes, and Glossary. London: Printed by C. Roworth, for Leigh and Sotheby, York Street, Covent Garden. MDCCXCVI.

Who so cleer yen hath and can nat see,
 Ful smal of ye avallith the office.
 Right so, syn reson yoven is to me
 For to discerne a vertu from a vice,
 If I nat can with reson me chevice,
 But wilfully fro reson me withdrawe,
 Thogh I of hir have no benefice
 No wondir, ne no favour in hir law.

Reson me bad, and redde as for the beste,
 To ete and drynke in tyme attemprely;
 But wilful yowthe nat obeie leste
 Unto that reed, ne sette nat therby.
 I take have of hem bothe outrageously
 And out of tyme; nat two yeer or three,
 But twenty wyntir past continually
 Excesse at borde hath leyd his knyf with me.

The natural result of this was, that the poet was now suffering under sickness as well as want of money; yet he still appears to have felt a hankering after his old haunts, the tavern and the stews.

The custome of my repleet abstinence,
 And greedy mowth, receite of swich outrage,
 And hondes two, as woot my negligence,
 Thus han me gyded and broght in servage
 Of hir that werreieth every age,
 Seeknesse I meene, riotoures whippe,
 Habundantly that paieth me my wage,
 So that me neither daunce list ne skippe.

The outward signe of Bachus and his lure,
 That at his dore hangith day by day,
 Excitith folk to taaste of his moisture
 So often, that men can nat wel seyn nay.

For me, I seye I was enclyned ay
Withouten daunger thider for to hye me,
But if swich charge upon my bak lay,
That I moot it forber as for a tyme;

Or but I were nakidly bestad
By force of the penylees maladie.
For thanne in herte cowde I nat be glad,
Ne lust had noon to Bachus house to hie.
Fy! lak of coyn departith compaignie,
And hevy purs with herte liberal
Qwenchith the thristy hete of hertes drie,
Where chinchy herte hath therof but smal.

I dar not telle how that the fresh repeir
Of Venus femel lusty children deer,
That so goodly so shaply were and feir,
And so plesant of port and of maneere,
And feede cowden al a world with cheere,
And of atyr passyngly wel byseye,
At Poules heed me maden ofte appeere,
To talke of mirthe and to disporte and pleye.

He spent much money, he says, in treating these damsels; and he adds, that he reaped all the evil consequences of his riotous living except one—his natural cowardice kept him out of tavern brawls. But he was so lavish in his expenditure, that he was always welcome among the cooks and taverners.

Wher was a gretter maistir eek than y,
Or bet acqweyntid at Westmynster yate,
Among the taverneres namely
And cookes? whan I cam, eerly or late,

I pynchid nat at hem in myne acate,
 But paied hem as that they axe wolde;
 Wherfore I was the welcomer algate,
 And for a verray gentil man yholde.

He informs us that he was a clerk in the office of the privy seal, and that he beat all his fellow clerks in sitting up at night and drinking.

No force of al this, go we now to wacche
 By nightertale out of al mesure ;
 For as in that finde cowde I no macche
 In al the privee seel with me tendure.
 And to the cuppe ay took I heede and cure,
 For that the drynke appalle sholde noght;
 But whan the pot emptid was of moisture,
 To wake aftirward cam nat in my thoght.

The result of this conduct was that Occleve lay in bed late in the morning, and he acknowledges that he knew only two individuals (apparently in the office of the privy seal with him) who equalled or rather approached him in their disinclination to leave their beds in the morning.

I dar not seyn Prentys and Arundel
 Me countrefete, and in swich wach go ny me;
 But often they hir bed loven so well,
 That of the day it drawith ny the pryme
 Or they rise up; nat can I telle the tyme
 Whan they to bedde goon, it is so late.

It would thus appear that at the beginning of the fifteenth century six o'clock in the morning, for that was the hour of prime, was considered a very late hour for rising, so much are our manners in this respect changed. A little further on, addressing

himself, he intimates that he had not only spent his own money, but that, finding it not sufficient for his extravagance, he had borrowed, and thus involved himself in debt.

Thy rentes annuel, as thou wel woost,
To scarce been greet costes to susteene;
And in thy cofre pardee is cold roost;
And of thy manuel labour, as I weene,
Thy lucre is swich that unneth is seene
Ne felt; of yytes seye I eek the same;
And stele, for the guerdon is so keene,
Ne darst thou nat, ne begge also for shame.

Than wolde it seeme that thou borwid haast
Mochil of that that thou haast thus despent
In outrage and excesse and verray waast.
Avyse thee, for what thyng that is lent
Of verray right most hoom ageyn be sent;
Thow thirin haast no perpetuitee;
Thy dettes paie, lest that thou be shent,
And or that thou therto compellid be.

After declaring his repentance for past offences, Occleve addresses Health as a god, and pleads thus :

Lo, lat my lord the Fourneval, I preye,
My noble lord that now is tresoreer,
From thyn hynesse have a tokne or tweye
To paie me that due is for this yeer
Of my yeerly ten poundes in theschequer,
Nat but for Michel terme that was last;
I dar nat speke a word of ferne yeer,
So is my spirit simple and sore agast.

It thus appears that Occleve had received a grant of an annuity from the exchequer, that payment had been stopped in the preceding

year, and that it was now in arrear for the year in which he was writing. Mason has pointed out the coincidence of this stoppage of payment the preceding year (for that appears to be here the meaning of *ferne yeer*) with an Act of Parliament of the year 1405, which stopped the payment of pensions recently granted; and, as Thomas Neville lord Furnival was appointed treasurer in that year, and held the office till 1408, it follows that this poem was written in the last quarter of the year 1406. Occleve refers in it to twenty years of misspent life, which would carry us back to 1386, and Mason, supposing him to have been sixteen years of age at that time, conjectures that he was born about 1370.

From this time forward we find Occleve constantly in want of money. A short poem, which was published in the older editions of Chaucer, but of which the date is uncertain, is addressed "to his empty purse." In the second piece published in Mason's volume, Occleve implores Henry Somer, then under-treasurer, to assist in obtaining the payment of the annuities due, not only to himself, but also to his three fellow clerks.

We truste upon your freendly gentillesse,
 Yee wole us helpe, and been our suppoaille.
 Now yeve us cause ageyn this Cristemesse
 For to be glad, o lord, whether our taille
 Shalle soone make us with our shippes saille
 To port salut; if yow list, we may singe,
 And elles moot us bothe mourne and waille,
 Tille your favour us sende releevynge.

We your servantes, Hoccleve and Baillay,
 Hethe and Offorde, yow byseeche and preye,
 Hastith our hervest as soone as yee may,
 For fere of stormes our wit is aweye.
 Were our seed inned, wel we mighten pleye,
 And us desporte, and synge, and make game.

As Somer was made a baron of the exchequer on the 8th of November, 1408, it appears probable that this poem was written on the approach of the Christmas of the preceding year, 1407. In another poem in Mason's manuscript, but which he has not printed, Occleve petitions the Archbishop of Canterbury, then lord Chancellor, for a patent for the payment of his arrears, the date of which must have been between 1407 and 1410.

It was not long after this period when Occleve composed his principal poem, which is printed for the first time in the present volume. From the allusions to the state of France at the latter end of this poem *De Regimine Principum*, and especially from the account of the martyrdom of John Badby, which occurred in 1410, we may conjecture that it was written in 1411, or perhaps in 1412. In the introduction to this poem, Occleve pretends that, lying in his bed one morning at Chester's Inn in the Strand, he reflected on the condition of his own affairs, till he became so restless that he left his bed and walked out into the fields. It will be remembered that at this time the Strand was itself bordered by fields. As he wandered about, lost in thought, he met an old man in the garb of a mendicant, who forced himself upon his acquaintance and undertook to advise and console him. After listening to the account the old man gave of himself, Occleve admitted him to his confidence, and told him that he was one of the writers of the privy seal, an office which he should have held twenty years at the Easter which was near at hand. If we suppose this book to have been written in the spring of the year 1412, it would carry back the appointment of Occleve to his office to the year 1392, the fifteenth year of the reign of King Richard II. He states further that King Henry IV. looked favourably upon him, and had granted him, as a reward for his services, an annuity from the exchequer of twenty marks a-year for life, but he complains of the difficulty of getting payment of this annuity, and expresses

his fears that, on the expiration of his period of service, he should be left in poverty and distress. He had waited long, he says, in the hope of obtaining a benefice in the church, but, despairing of this, he had married. After much consultation with the old man, the latter advises Occleve to compile a book and dedicate it to the Prince of Wales, by which he would conciliate his favour, and probably obtain through him the regular payment of his annuity. Acting upon the old man's advice, Occleve compiled this book, *De Regimine Principum*. He speaks of his youthful extravagance in much the same terms as in the poem printed by Mason; and on several occasions he names Chaucer as his early friend and instructor, and laments over his loss.

It is probable that Occleve's appeal, in this instance, was successful, for he seems to have enjoyed the favour of Henry V. Among the small poems contained in Mason's MS are one on the removal of the body of King Richard II. to Westminster, one of the first acts of the young king's reign; another addressed to Henry V. "when the lords of the kingdom paid their homage to him at Kenyngton;" and a third addressed to Sir John Oldcastle, exhorting him to abandon Lollardism, at the time when the king was at Southampton on his first voyage to Harfleur. Henry embarked on the 13th of August, 1415. We hear nothing more of Occleve through Henry's reign, except that one of the short pieces printed by Mason, and supposed to have been written near the end of the reign, represents him as still suffering from poverty, and appealing to the king for the payment of his annuity. A short piece printed by Mason, and supposed to belong to the first years of the reign of King Henry VI., is addressed to Carpenter, afterwards (in 1443) made bishop of Worcester, and contains an appeal for assistance in paying the poet's debts; and another is addressed to the duke of York (father of Edward IV.), who appears to have been his patron,

and to have administered comfort to his old age. At this time, indeed, he must have been considerably advanced in years. He speaks of the duke's son, prince Edward, and of his tutor; and Mason has suggested that it cannot have been written much before the year 1449, when Edward was only seven years old. It is supposed that Occleve died about the year 1450; in which year, according to Mason's conjecture on the date of his birth, he would be eighty years of age.

Occleve tells us that he compiled his treatise *De Regimine Principum* from three works which were very celebrated in his time. These were, in the first place, the supposititious epistle of Aristotle, addressed to Alexander the Great, and known by the title of *Secretum Secretorum*; secondly, the book of Ægidius de Columna, or Colonna, entitled *De Regimine Principum*, and of which Occleve speaks as "Gyles of Regement of Prynces;" and, lastly the well-known work of Jacobus de Cessolis, or Jacques de Cessoles, entitled the Game of Chess Moralized, of which Caxton's celebrated book, "The Game of the Chess," was a translation through the French. This poem of Occleve was one of the most remarkable and most popular works of the earlier half of the fifteenth century, yet it would have little interest for us but for the frequent allusions to the events and feelings of the age in which it was written. In the introductory part Occleve complains of the neglect which was shown in his time to the old soldiers of the French wars of the preceding century (p. 32); of the great prevalence of covetousness among the gentry (p. 43); of the eagerness of the churchmen after rich benefices, and of the prevalence of pluralism and absenteeism (p. 51); of the mischievous influence of the aristocracy in the courts of law (p. 54); of the evil practice of betrothing children in their infancy (p. 59); and of the frequency of adultery (p. 64). When he enters upon the subject of

his book he complains of the want of truthfulness among the knights of his time (p. 82), and of the absence of righteousness in England (p. 89); he urges the prince to obey the laws when he should have become king, as one of the principal duties of royalty, and complains that in England the laws were neglected, and feuds and outrages passed unpunished. Poor men could get no justice, while rich men committed crimes with impunity (p. 102). He especially urges the prince as king to protect the free election of the bishops in the cathedral churches (p. 104). In treating of Pity he condemns the practice of granting pardons for offences, giving an illustrative anecdote of a king of "this land," (p. 112), and advocates the punishment of death (p. 114). In the chapter on Mercy, Occleve commends the merciful dispositions of John of Gaunt and his son Henry IV. And in treating of "largesse" and avarice he speaks again of his own youthful prodigality, and repeats his appeal for the payment of his annuity (p. 156). He complains of the absence of liberality among lords in his time (p. 168). In treating of Prudence, he counsels the prince, still with an eye to his own grievance, not to grant pensions unless he intends to pay them (p. 172). And, in his last chapter, when treating of Peace, he alludes to the troubles in England (p. 187), complains how unworthy people were promoted in the world before those who were worthy, while the deserving "clerkes" of Oxford and Cambridge were neglected (p. 187); describes the melancholy state of France (p. 190); and deprecates the hostilities between France and England (p. 193).

The popularity of Occleve's poem *De Regimine Principum*, at least in the earlier part and middle of the fifteenth century, is proved by the number of copies which still exist in MS.; but that popularity seems soon to have declined, for it was never printed. The best MS. that I have yet met with is one in the old Royal Library in the British Museum, MS. Reg. 17 D. VI., which con-

tains a large illumination representing the author presenting his book to the prince, and a portrait of Chaucer in the margin of one of the leaves (at p. 179 of the present edition), from which circumstances I think it may have been the identical copy presented by Occleve to prince Henry. It is from this manuscript that I have edited the text, collating it with some other copies, by which I have corrected a few evident clerical errors. On the authority of this MS., I have retained the usual orthography of the poet's name, too, instead of that of Hoccleve, which Mason adopted from his manuscript of the shorter poems. The balance of authority is decidedly in favour of Occleve without the *h*.

There is a large amount of material in the report prepared for the last of the year, and a portion of it is in the hands of the editor of the paper for publication. It is a very interesting and valuable report, and it is hoped that it will be published in the near future. It contains a great deal of information about the work of the year, and it is a very good example of the work of the year.

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DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM.

MUSYNG upone the restles besynesse
The whiche this troubyl world hath ay on honde,
That other thyng than fruyte of bitternesse
Ne yildeth not, as I kan undirstonde,
At Chestres Inne, right fast by the Stronde,
As I lay in my bedde upon a nyght,
Thought me bireft of slepe the force and myght.

And many a day and nyght that wikked hyne
Hadde byfore vexed my pore goste
So grevously, that of angwisshe and pyne
No riccher man was never in no coste,
This dar I say, may no wight make his boste
That he with thought was bette than I acqueynted,
For he to the deth welnyghe hath me feynted.

Besily in my mynde I gan revolve
The welthe unsure of every creature,
How lightly that fortune it kan dissolve,
Whan that hir list that it no lenger dure;
And of the brotilnesse of hir nature
My tremlyng hert so grete gastnesse hadde,
That my spirites were of my lyfe sadde.

Me felle to mynde how that, not longe agoo,
Fortunes stroke doune threste estate roialle
Into myschief; and I toke hede also
Of many another lord that hadde a falle;
In mene estate eke sikirnesse at alle
Ne sawe I none, but I sawe at the laste
Where seurté for to abide hir caste.

In povere estate she pight hir pavyloun,
To kever hir fro the stroke of descendyng;
For she knewe no lower descencioun,
Save onely dethe, fro whiche no wight livyng
Defende hym may; and thus, in my musyng,
I destitute was of joye and goode hope,
And to myne ease no thyng coude I grope.

For right as blive ran it in my thought,
Thoughe I pore be, yit somewhat lese I may;
Than deemed I that seurtee wold nought
Withe me abide, it is not to hir pay
There to sojourne, as she descende may.
And thus unsiker of my smal lyvelode,
Thought leide on me fulle many an hevy lode.

I thought also yf I into povert crepe,
Than am I entred into sikirnesse.
But suche seurté myght I ay waile and wepe,
For poverté bredethe but hevynesse.
Allas! where is this worldes stabilnesse?
Here up, here doune; here honour, here reproof;
Now hole, now sike; now bounté, now myscheef.

Boecius. Maximum genus
infortunii est
fuisse felicem,
etc.

And whan I hade rolled up and doune
This worldes stormy wawes in my mynde,
I sawe wele povertie was conclusioun
Of alle wele-fare reigntyng in mankynde,
And how in bookes thus writen I fynde,
The werst kynde of wrecchednesse is
A man to have be welfulle or this.

Allas ! thought I, what sikirnesse is that,
To live ay seure of greef and of noisaunce ?
What shal I do ? best is I strive nat
Ageyn the peys of fortunes balaunce ;
For wele I wote that hir brotil constaunce
A wight no while suffre kan sojourne
In o plite, thus I wist nat how to turne.

For whan a man wenethe to stonde moste constant,
Than is he next to his overthrowng.
For flittyng is she and so variant,
There is no trust upon hir faire lauchyng ;
After glad looke she shapethe hir to styng ;
I was adredde so of hir gerynesse,
That my lyfe was but a dedely gladnesse.

Thus ilke nyght I walwed to and fro,
Seekyng rest ; but certainly she
Appered not, but thought, my cruelle foo,
Chaced hade hir and slepe away fro me ;
And for I shuld nat alone be,
Ageyn my luste wacche profred his service,
And I admytted hym in hevy wise.

So longe a nyght ne felt I never none
 As was that same, to my juggement.
 Whoso that thoughty is, he is wo-bygone;
 The thoughtfulle wight is vesselle of turment,
 There is no greef to hym equipollent.
 He gravethe deppest of sikenesses alle;
 Fulle wo is hym that in suche caas is falle.

What wight that inly pensyfe is, I trowe
 His moste desire is to be solitarie.
 That this is sothe in my persone I knowe;
 For ever while that fretyng adversarie
 Myne hert made to hym tributarie,
 In souking of the fresshest of my bloode
 To sorwe soole me thought it ded me goode.

Marcialis
 Cocus.
 Ille vere
 dolet qui sine
 teste dolet.

For the nature of hevynesse is this,
 If it abounde gretely in a wight,
 The place eschueth he where as joye is;
 For joye and he may nat accorde aright,
 As discordant as day is to the nyght,
 And honour adversarie is unto shame,
 So hevynesse is to joye and game.

Whan to the thoughtfulle wight is tolde a tale,
 He herethe as thoughe he thennes were;
 His hevy thoughtes so hym plukke and hale
 Hider and thider, and hym greve and dere,
 That his eres availe hym nat a pere;
 He understondethe no thyng what men say,
 So ben his wittes gone fro hym away.

The smert of thought I by experience
Knowe also wele as dothe ony man lyvyng;
His frosty swote and his firy fervence,
And troubylly dremes drempte alle in waylyng,
My mased hede slepeles hath of kunnyng
And witte dispoyled, and so me by-japed,
That after dethe fulle ofte have I gaped.

Passe over whan this stormy nyght was gone,
And day gan at my wyndowe in to prie,
I rose me up, for bote fonde I none
In myne unresty bedde lenger to lie;
In to the feelde I dressed me on hie,
And in my wofulle hert deepe gan wade,
As he that was bareyne of thoughtes glade.

By that I walked hade a certeyne tyme,
Were it an houre I note more or lesse,
A poore olde hore man came walkyng by me,
And seide, "Good day, sire, and God yow blesse!"
But I no word, for my sikly distresse
Forbade myne eres usen her office;
For whiche this olde man heeld me lewde and nyce.

Til he toke heede to my drery cheere,
And to me dedely colour pale and wan,
Than thought he thus, "This man that I see here
Alle wronge is wrest, by ought that I see kan."
He sterte unto me, and seide, "Slepest thou, man?
Awake!" and he gan me shake wonder faste,
And with a sighe I answerde at the laste,

“ A ! who is there ? ” “ I,” quod this olde grey,
“ Am here ; ” and me tolde he the manere,
How he spake to me, as ye herd me sey.
“ O, man ! ” quod I, “ for Cristes love dere,
Yf thou wilt ought done at my prayere,
As go thy way, talke to me nomore ;
Thy wordes alle anoyethe me fulle sore.

Voyde fro me, me liste no companye ;
Encrece not my greef, I have ynow.”
“ My sone, haste thou gode luste thy sorwe drye,
And mayst releevd be, what man art thou ?
Wirke after me, it shalle be for thy prow ;
Thow art but yonge, and hast but litelle seen,
And fulle seelde is that yonge folk wise ben.

If that the like to ben esed wele,
Then suffre me withe the to talke a while.
Art thou lettred ? ” “ Ye,” quod I, “ somede.”
“ Blissd be God ! than hope I, by seint Gile,
That God to the thy witte shalle reconcile,
Whiche that me thynkethe is ferre fro the went,
Thurghe thassent of thy grevous turment.

Lettred folk han gretter discrecioun,
And better conceyve kan a mannes sawe,
And rather wole applie to resoun,
And fro folye sonner hem withdrawe,
Then he that kan neither resoun ne lawe,
Ne lerned hathe no lettrure ;
Plukke up thyne hert, I hope I shalle the cure.”

“Cure, godeman ? ye, thow art a faire leche ;
Cure thy self, that tremblest as thou goste,
For alle thyne art wole enden in thy speche,
It lithe nat in thy powere, pore goste,
To hele me ; thou art as sike almoste,
And first on thy self kithe thyne arte,
And yf ought leve, than lete me have parte.

Go forthe thy wey, I pray the, or be stille,
Thow doost me more anoye than thou wenest,
Thow art as fulle of clappe as is a mylle,
Thow doost nought here but grevest me and tenest.
Good man, thou nost what thow menest,
In the lithe nat to redresse my noiaunce ;
And yit thou maist be wele willed perchaunce.

It moste be a gretter man of myght
Than thow art, that shuld me releeve.”
“What, sone myne, thou feelest nat aright ;
To herken me, what shalle it hurte or greeve ?”
“Petir ! good man, though we talke here til eve,
Alle is in veyne, thy might may nat atteyne
To hele me, suche is my wofulle peyne.”

“What that I kan or may, ne woste thou nought ;
Hardely, sone, telle on, how it is.”
“Man, at a word, it is encombrous thought
That causethe me this sorwe and fare amys.”
“Now, sone, and yf there no thyng be but this,
Do as I shalle the sey, and thyne estate
Amende I shalle, but yf thou be obstynate,

And wilfully rebelle and disobeye,
 And liste not to my lore the confourme;
 For in suche caas what shulde I speke or seye,
 Or in my best wise the enfourme?
 If thou it waife and take anothir fourme,
 After thy childisse chere and froward conceyt,
 Thow doost unto thy self harme and deceyt.

O thyng I say, yf thow go felaweles,
 Alle solitarie, and counseille lakke and rede,
 As me thenkethe, thy gise is douteles,
 Thow likly art to bere a fonnede hede;
 While thou art soole, thought is wastyng sede,
 Suche is in the, and that in grete foisoun,
 And thou redeles kanst not voide his poysoun.

*Ve soli ejus,
 si cadit non
 habet suble-
 vantem, etc.*

The book seithe thus, I redde it yore agone,
 Woo be to hym that luste to be alone;
 For, yf he falle, helpe hathe he none
 To rise; thus say I by thy persone.
 I fonde the soole and thy wittes echone
 Were fro the fledde, and disparpled fulle wide;
 Wherefore it semethe the nedethe a guyde.

Whiche that the may unto thy wittes lede,
 That grappest here and there as dothe the blynde,
 And ay mysgoste, and yit have I no drede,
 If thou receyve wolt into thy mynde
 My lore, and execute it, thow shalt fynde
 Therein suche ese that thy maladie
 Abregge it shalle, and thy malyncolie.

Proverb. Ani-
mus gaudens
etatem flori-
dam facit,
spiritus autem
tristis desiccet
ossa.

Fulle holosome were it to stynte of thy wo

And take unto the spirites of gladnesse.

What profite fyndest thou to mourne so ?

Salamon seithe, that sorwe and hevynesse

Bones of man driethe by duresse,

And hert glad makethe florisschyng age ;

Therefore, I redethe, thy wo aswage.

He seithe, as motthes to a clothe anoyen

And of his wolfe maken it alle bare,

And also as wormes a tree distroyen

Thurghe her Percyng, right so sorwe and karre

Byreven man his helthe and his welfare,

And his dayes abregge, and short his lyfe ;

Loo ! what profite is it to be pensyfe.

Now, good sone, telle on thy grevaunce,

What is thy cause of thought in specialle ?

Hast thou of worldly goodes habundaunce,

And carest thou how it kept be shalle ?

Or art thou nedy, and hast but smalle,

And trustest sone a riche man to be ?

Or elles lovest thou hir that loveth not the ?

I have herd seide, in kepyng of richesse

Is thought and wo, and besy awaite alway ;

The poore and the nedy eke hathe hevynesse,

For to his purpose he not atteyne may ;

The lover, also men see day by day,

Prolle after that that he shalle never fynde ;

Thus thought turmenteth folk in sundry kynde.

If thou be in ony of thise agrevede,
Or elleswhat, telle on in Goddes name.
Thow seest alle day the begger is releved,
That sitte and beggethe, blynd, croked, and lame ;
And why ? for he lettethe for no shame
His harmes and his poyerte to bewrey
To folk, as they gone by him in the wey.

For and he kepe hym cloos, and holde his pees,
And not outshewe how sike he inward is,
He may alle day so sitten helpeles ;
And, sone mine, althoughe he fare amys
That hidethe so, God wote, the wite is his.
But this begger his hurtes wole not stele,
He wille telle alle, and more he kan not hele.

Right so yf the luste to have a remedie
Of thyne annoye that prikkethe the so smert,
The verray cause of thyne hidde maladie
Thow must discover, and telle out alle thyne hert.
Yf thow it hide, thou it shalt not astert,
That thow ne falle shalt in somme myschaunce ;
Therefore amende thow thy governaunce.

Beware of thought, for it is perilous ;
For he the streyt way to discomfort men ledethe ;
His violence is fulle outrageous ;
Unwise is he, that besy thought ne dredethe,
In whom that he his mortall venyme shedeth,
But yf a vomite folowe after blive,
At the porte of dispeire he may arrive.

Sone, suche thought lurkyng the withynne,
 That huntethe after thy confusioun,
 Hye tyme is to voide and lete hym twynne,
 And walke at large out of thy prisoun.
 Beware the fendes slye conclusioun ;
 For yf he may the unto dispeire bryng,
 Thow shalt mone, and he wille laughe and syng.

Some man for lakke of occupacioun
 Musethe ferther than his witte may streeche,
 And alle thurghe the fendes instigacioun,
 Dampnable erreure holdethe, and kan not lesche
 For no counseille ne rede, as did a wrecche
 Not longe agoo, whiche that for heresye
 Convict and brent was unto asshen drye.

The precious body of our lord Jhesu
 In fourme of brede he leaved not at alle ;
 He was in no thyng abasshed ne eschu
 To sey it was but brede materialle.
 He seide a preestes power was as smalle
 As a rakers, or suche another wight,
 And to make it hade no gretter myght.

My lord the prynce, God him save and blesse !
 Was at his dedely castigacioun,
 And of his soule hade grete tendirnesse,
 Thurstyng sore his salvacioun.
 Grete was his pitevous lamentacioun,
 Whan this renegade wold not blynne
 Of the stynkyng errour that he was ynne.

This good lord hight him to be suche a mene
To his fader, our liege lord sovereyne,
Yf he renounce wolde his errour clene,
And come unto our good beleve ageyne,
He shulde of his lyfe sure be and certeyne,
And sufficient livelode eke shulde he have
Unto that day he cladde were in his grave.

Also this noble prince and worthy knyght,
God quyte hym his charitable labour!
Or ony stikke kindelede were or light,
The sacrament our blissed saviour
Withe reverence grete and hye honour
He lete fette this wrecche to converte,
And make our feithe to synken in his herte.

But alle for nought wold it not betide,
He held forthe his oppynyoun dampnable,
And caste our holy cristen feithe aside,
As he that was to the fende acceptable,
By ony outwarde token resonable,
If he inwarde hade ony repentaunce,
That wote he that of no thyng hath dotaunce.

Lete the divines of hym speke and muse,
Where his soule is become, or whider gone;
Myne unkunnyng of that me shalle excuse,
Of whiche matere knowyng have I none.
But wolde God tho Cristes foes echone
That as he helde were yservd so,
For I am sure there ben many mo.

The more routhe is, allas ! what men ben they
 That hem deliten in suche surquidrye ?
 For mannes resoun may not preve our fey,
 That they wole it disprave or denye.
 To our Lorde God that sitte in heven hye
 Shalle they desire to ben egalle ;
 Nay, that ne was never ne be shalle.

That our Lord God seithe in holy scripture
 May not be fals, that knowethe every wight ;
 But he be madde, and, thoughe a creature,
 In his Goddes werkes feele nat aright.
 Shalle he rebelle ayeinst his Lordes myght,
 Whiche alle this wide worlde hathe made of nought ?
 For resoun may nat knytte it in his thought.

Was it nat a monstre as in nature
 That God ybore was of a virgyne ?
 Yit is it sothe, thoughe men by conjecture
 Of resoun, or what he kan ymagyne,
 Not savoure it, ne it ne kan determyne.
 He that Almighty is dothe alle his liste,
 He wole his kunnyng hidde be, and not wiste.

Fides non
 habet meri-
 tum ubi hu-
 mana ratio
 præbet expe-
 rimentum.

Our feithe were not to us meritorie,
 If that we myght by resoun it preeve.
 Lete us not fro God twynne and fro his glorie,
 As holy chirche bitte us lete us believe ;
 But we therto obeye, it shalle us greeve
 Importably, lete us do as she bitte,
 For our olde faders alle han folowed it.

Presumpcioun, a! benedicite!
Why vexest thou folk with thy fran[e]sye?
Thoughe no thyng elles were, I sey for me.
But see how that the worthy prelacye,
And undir hem the sufficient clergye,
Endowed of profounde intelligence,
Of alle this lande werreyen thy sentence.

That self same were to me a bridelle,
By whiche I wolde governed be and guyede;
And elles alle my labour were in ydelle.
By holy chirche I wole be justifiede;
To that alle hoolly is myne hert appliede,
And ever shalle, I truste in goddes grace;
Suche surquidrie in me shalle have no place.

Sone, if God wole, thou art none of tho
That wrapped ben in this dampnacioun."
"Ey! Crist forbede it! sire," seide I tho,
"I thanke it God, none inclinacioun
Have I to laboure in probacioun
Of his hye knowleche and his myghty werkes;
For suche matere to my witte fulle derk is.

Of our feithe wole I not dispute at alle;
But at o worde, I in the sacrament
Of the autere fully beleve and shalle,
Withe Goddes helpe, while my lyfe is to me lent;
And in dispite of the fendes talent,
In alle the articles of the feithe
I beleve as holy writte seithe."

“ Now good thrift come upone the, my sone dere !
Thy goste is newe awaked, wele I see ;
And somewhat eke amendede is thy chere.
And first I was agast fulle sore of the,
Leste thou thurghe thoughtfulle adversitee
Not hadest stonden in the feithe aright ;
Now is myne hert woxen glad and light.

Hast thou in me eny gretter savour
Than thou hadest first whan thou me sy,
Whan I apposed the of thy langour ?
Sey on the sothe.” “ Ye, somdele,” quod I.
“ My sone, in feithe, that is seide fulle feyntly ;
Thy savour fulle smalle is yit, as I trowe ;
But or ought longe I shalle the sothe knowe.

I wote wele, sone, of me thus wolt thou thynke,
This olde doted griselle holte him wise ;
He wenethe to make in myne hede to synke
His lewde clappe, of whiche sette I no price ;
He is a noble prechour at device,
Grete noise hathe thurghe his thynne lippes drye
This day out passed, the develle in his ye.

But thoughe I olde and hore be, sone myne,
And poore by my clothyng and aray,
And not so wide a gowne have as is thyne,
So smalle y-pynched, and so fresshe and gay,
My rede in happe yit the profite may ;
And likly that thou deemest for folie
Is gretter wisdom than thou canst espie.

Undir an olde poore habite reignethe ofte
Grete vertu, thoughe it mustre poorely ;
And where as grete aray is up one lofte,
Vice is but seelden hidde, that wele wote I.
But not reporte I pray the inwardly,
That fresshe aray I generally deprave ;
Thise worthy men mowe it wele use and have.

But this me thynkethe a grete abusioun,
To see one walke in gownes of scarlet
Twelve yerdes wide, with pendaunt sleeves doune
On the grounde, and the furre therin set,
Amountyng unto twenty pound and bet ;
And yf he for it paide have, he no goode
Hath hym lefte to bey withe an hooode.

For thoughe he yode forthe amonge the prees,
And overloke every poore wight,
His coffre and eke his purs ben penylees,
He hathe no more than he gothe in right ;
For land, rent, or catelle, he may go light,
The weight of hem shalle not so muche peise
As dothe his gowne ; is suche aray to preise ?

Nay, sone, it is alle mys, me thynkethe,
So poore a wight his lord to countirfete,
In his aray ; in my conceyt it stynkethe.
Certes to blame ben the lordes grete,
Yf that I durst sey, that her men lete
Usurpe suche a lordes apparaile ;
It is not worthe, my child, withouten faile.

Som tyme men myght aferre lordes knowe
By her aray from other folk, but now
A man shalle studie and muse a longe throwe
Whiche is whiche; a! lordes, it sitte to yow,
Amende this, for it is for your prow;
Yf betwene you and your men no difference
Be in aray, the lesse is your reverence.

Also there is another newe gette,
A foule waste of clothe and excessyfe,
There gothe no lesse in a mannes typette
Than of brode clothe a yerd, by my lyfe.
Me thynkethe this a verray inductyfe
Unto stelthe, ware hem of hempyn-lane,
For stelthe is meeded with a chokelewe bane.

Lete every lord his owen men defende
Suche grete aray, and than, on my perile,
This land within a while shalle amende.
In Goddes name, puttethe it in exile!
It is synne outrageous and vile;
Lordes, yf ye your estate and honour
Loven, flemethe this vicious errour.

What is a lord withouten his meyné?
I putte caas his foes hym assaile
Sodeinly in the strete, what helpe shalle he,
Whos sleves encombrous so side trayle,
Do to his lord, he may hym not availe;
In suche a caas he is but a womman,
He may not stonde hym in stede of a man.

His armes two han righ ynoughe to done ,
And somewhat more, his sleves up to holde.
The taillours, I trowe, mote hereafter sone
Shape in the felde, they shalle not sprede and folde
On her bord, thoughe they never so fayne wolde,
The clothe that shalle be in a gowne wrought;
Take an hole clothe is best, for lesse is nought.

The skynner into the feld muste also ;
His hous in Londone is to streyt and scars
To done his craft ; somtyme it was nat so.
O lordes, yevethe unto your men her pars
That so done, and acqueynte hem bette withe Mars,
God of bataile, he loveth none aray
That hurtethe manhode at preef or assay.

Who now most may bere on his bakke at ones
Of clothe and furre, he hathe a fresshe renoune ;
He is a lusty man for the nones ;
But drapers and eke skimmers in toune
For suche folk han a special orisoune,
That trapped is withe curses here and there,
And ay shalle be, til they be payed for her gere.

In dayes olde, whan smalle apparaile
Suffised unto hye estate and mene,
Was grete householde wele stuffede of vitaile ;
But now housholdes ben so sklendre and lene ;
For alle the good that men may rippe and glene
Wasted is in outrageous aray,
So that householdes men not hold may.

Pride hathe wel lever bere an hungry mawe
To bedde, than lakke of aray outrage ;
He no pris settethe by mesures lawe,
Ne takethe of hym clothe, mete, ne wage ;
Measure is out of londe on pilgrimage ;
But I suppose he shalle resorte as blive,
For verray nede wole us therto drive.

There may no lord take up a newe gise,
But that a knave shalle the same up take.
If lordes wolde in this wise,
For to do suche gownes to hem make
As men did in olde tyme, I undirtake
The same jette shulde up be take and usede,
And alle this costeleue and outrage refused.

Of Lancastre duc Johan, whos soule in heven
I fulle deeme and truste sittethe fulle hye ;
A noble prince I may allegge and neven,
Other may no man of him testifie ;
I never sawe a lord that couthe hym gye
Bet like his estate, alle knyghtly prowesse
Was to hym girt, God his soule blesse !

His garnementes were not fulle wide,
And yit the hym became wondirly welle.
Now wolde God the wast of clothe and pride
Yputte were in exile perpetuelle,
For the worshippe and profite universelle ;
And lordes myght do alle this yf they wolde,
The olde jette up take, and it forthe holde.

Than myght silver walke more thikke
Amonge the peple than it dothe now.
Ther wolde I fayne that were sette the prikke,
Not for my self, I shalle do wele ynow,
But, sone, for that suche men as thou
With the worlde wrastle, myght han plenté
Of coigne, where as ye have now scarsité.

Now have thise lordes but litelle nede of bromes
To sweepe away the filthe out of the strete,
Setthe side sleeves of penylees gromes
Wole it up likke, be it drye or wete.
O England, stonde upright on thy fete;
So foule a waste in so symple degree
Banysshe, or sore it shalle repent the.

If a wight vertuous, but withe narwe clothes,
To lordes courtes now a dayes go,
His companye is to folkes lothed;
Men passen by hym to and fro,
And scorne hym, for he is araide so;
To her conceyt is no wight vertuous
But he that of aray is outrageous.

But he that kan flatre or be a baude,
And by tho two fresshe aray hym gete,
It holden is to hym honour and laude.
Trouthe and clenness most men forgete
In lordes courtes, for they hertes frete,
They hyndren folk, fy upon tonges trewe!
They displesance in lordes courtes brewe.

Loo, sone myne, this tale is at an ende ;
 Now, good sone, have of me no dysdeyne,
 Thoughe I be olde, and myne aray unthende ;
 For many a yong man, wote I wele certeyne,
 Of corage is so proude and so hauteyne,
 That to the poore and olde mannes doctrine
 Fulle seelde hem deynethe bowe aud enclyne.

Seneca ad
 Lucillum.

Senek seithe age is an infirmité
 That leche none ne kan it hele,
 For to the dethe next neighbore is he,
 There may no wyght the chartre of lyfe ensele,
 The ende is dethe of male and eke femele ;

Nil certius
 morte, etc.

No thyng is more certein than dethe is,
 Ne more uncertein than the tyme ywis.

Scriptum est,
 honora pa-
 trem et ma-
 trem, ut sis
 longevus su-
 per terram.

As touchyng age, God in holy writte,
 Right thus seith, ' Fader and moder honoure,
 That thou maist be longe lyved ; ' thus he bitte.
 Than mote it folowe upon this scripture,
 Age is a guerdoun to a creature,
 And longe lyved is there none withouten age ;
 Wherof I sey in elde is avauntage.

And the rewarde of God may not be smalle,
 His yiftes ben fulle noble and profitable,
 Forthy ne lakke thou none age at alle ;
 Whan youthe is paste is age resonable ;
 Age hathe insight how unsure and unstable
 This worldes cours is by lengthe of his yeres,
 And kan defende him from his sharpe breres.

Lord, where it be maistrye to knowe,
Whan a man oft hathe sondry weyes ride,
Whiche is the best ; nay, forsothe, I trowe,
Right so he that hathe many a worlde abide,
There he in youthe wrought mys or dide,
His age it seethe and bitte hym it eschewe,
And sekithe weyes covenable and dewe.

When thow hast assaide bothe two,
Sadde age, I sey, after thy skittishe youthe,
As thow muste nedes atteyne therto,
Or sterve yong, than I trowe thow wold bow the
To suche conceytes as I have yove the,
And thanke God devoutely in thyne hert,
That he hath suffrede the thy youthe astert.

Youthe fulle smalle rewarde hathe to goodnesse,
And perile dredethe he none, wote I wele ;
Alle his devocioun and holynesse
At the taverne is, as, for the most dele,
To Bacus syne and to the leef-sele
His youthe hym halethe, and whan that hym happethe
To chirche gone, of niceté he clappethe.

The cause why men oughten thider gone
Not conceyve kan his wilde steresshe hede :
To followe it also bote is it none
To telle hyme, for thoughe men sowen sede
Of vertu, in yong men it is dede ;
As blive his rebelle goste it mortifieth
Alle thyng save folie in a yong man diethe.

Whan I was yonge, I was fulle recheles,
Proude, nice, and ryotous for the maystrye;
And amonge other conscienceles,
By that sette I not the worthe of a flye;
And of hem hauntede I the companye
That went on pilgernage to taverne,
Whiche before unthrift berethe the lanterne.

There offred I wel more than my tithe,
And withdrewe holy chirches duetee.
My frendes me conceilede often sithe,
That I withe lownesse and humilitee
To my curate go shulde and make his gree;
But strawe for her rede, wold I not bowe
For ought they coude prayen alle or wowe.

Whan folk wele reuled dressede hem to bedde
In tyme due by rede of nature,
To the taverne quygly I me spedde,
And pleide at dyce while the nyght wolde endure.
There the fourmERE of every creature
Dismembrede I with othes grete, and rent
Lym from lym, or I thens went.

And thoughe it fals were that I sware or spake,
For the desire fervent of covetise,
Fonde I in perjurie no defaute ne lakke,
But ever enticed me that in alle wise
Myne othes grete I shulde exercise;
And specially for lucre, in alle manere,
Swere and forswere withe bolde face and chere.

But this condicioun, loo ! hade I ever,
Thoughe I proude were in worde or in speche,
Whan strokes came in place I gan dissever
Fro my felawes, ne sought I never leche
For hurte that I there toke ; what shulde I seche
A salve whan I therto hade no nede ?
I hertles was ay thurghe myne impressede drede.

Thoo myght I spende an hundrede mark by yere,
Alle thyng quytte, my sone, I gabbe nought ;
I was so proude I hade no man my peere ;
In pride and lecherie was alle my thought ;
No more I hade sette verrailly ne rought
A wyfe or maide or another to defoule,
Than to shete or pleye at the balle or boule.

Right nyce girles at my retenu
Hade I an hepe, wives, and other mo ;
What so they were wold I none eschu ;
And yeres fele I contynued so.
Allas ! I no thyng was ware of the wo
That folowed me, I lokede not behynde ;
Conceytes yonge they ben fulle derke and blinde.

An office hade I lucratyfe,
And wanne ynoughe, God wote, and somdele more ;
But never thought I in alle my yonge lyfe
What I falsly gate for to restore.
Wherfore I now repente wondirly sore ;
And yf it mysgoten was, mys was dispendede,
Of whiche our Lord God gretely was offended.

He sawe I nolde abstene me for no goode
Of myne outrageous iniquitee,
And whan his lust was withdrowe the floode
Of welthe, and at the grounde ebbe sette he me,
With povertie for my gilt me feffede he ;
Suche wreche toke he for my cursed synne,
Nomore goode have I than I stonde ynne.

Gold, silver, jewelle, clothe, beddyng, aray,
Ne have I none other than thow maist see.
Pardé this olde russet is not gay,
And in my purs so grete sommes be,
That there nys counter in alle cristenté
Whiche that kan at ony nombre sette ;
That shalt thow see, for my purs wole I unshette.

Come hidre, my sone, and loke whethir
In this purs there be ony crosse or crouche ;
Save nedle and threde, and thymelle of lether,
Here seest thow nought that man may handelle or touche.
The feende, men seyne, may hoppe in a pouche,
Whan that no crosse therein may appeere,
And by my purs the same ye may sey here.

O where is now alle the wantone money
That I was maister of and governour,
Whan I knewe not what povert was to sey ?
Now is povert the glas and the myrrour
In whiche I see my God, my savyour ;
Or povert came, wist I not what God was,
But now I knowe and see hym in this glas.

And where ben my gownes of scarlet,
 Sangweyn, murrey, and blewes sadde and light,
 Grenes also, and the faire vyolet,
 Hors and harneys, fresshe and lusty in sight?
 My wikkede lyfe hathe putte alle this to flight;
 But certes yit me greveth the moste of alle
 My frenship is alle clene from me falle.

O while I stode in welthe I was honourede,
 And many one of my companye glade,
 And now I am mysloked on and lourede;
 There rekkethe none how harde I be bystade.
 A! Lord, this worlde is unstable and unsadde,
 This worlde honourethe not mannes persone
 For hym self, sone, but for Gode alone.

Salamon.
 Omnia pecu-
 nie obediunt.

Fulle sothe fynde I the word of Salamon,
 That to money obeyen alle thynges;
 For that my coigne and coigne worthe is agone,
 Contrarien they my wille and my biddynges,
 That in my welthe withe her flaterynges
 Helden withe me, what that I wrought or seide;
 Now disobey they that than obeide.

Now sey they thus, 'I wist wele alway
 That hym destroye wolde his foule largesse,
 I tolde hym so, and ever he seide, nay.'
 And yit they lyen, as God me blesse;
 They me comfortede ay in myne excesse,
 And seide I was a manly man withealle;
 Her hony wordes turned me to galle.

Scriptum est,
Nolo mortem
peccatoris,
etc.

God, whiche of his benigne curtesye,
And of his chere lovyng tendirnesse,
He of the synfulle hathe not wille he dye,
But lyve for to amende his wikkednesse,
Hym thanke I and his infinite goodnesse ;
His grace likethe that, thurghe worldly peyne,
My soule escape may the feendes cheyne.

Job hade an hyer falle than I, pardé,
For he was clomben hyer in richesse,
And paciently he his adversité
Toke, as the bible bere kan witnesse ;
And afterwarde God alle his hevynesse
Turnede to joye, and so may he do myne,
Whan it likethe to his myght divine.

Lord, right as thow lust, so thow do me to ;
But ever I hope sure be of that place
Whiche as thy mercy bought hathe us unto,
Yf that us lust for to sue thy grace.
A ! Lorde almyghty, in my lives space,
Of my gilte thow graunte me repentaunce,
And thy stroke take in charitable suffraunce.

I couthe of youthe have talked more and tolde
Than I have done, but the day passethe swithe,
And eke me lever is by many folde
Thy greef to knowe, whiche that sitte so ny the.
Telle on anone, my gode sone, and I the
Shalle herken as thow hast done me ;
And, as I kan, wole I counceile the."

“ Graunt mercy, dere fader, of your speche ;
Ye han right wele me comforted and esede ;
And hertily I pray yow and beseche,
What I first to you spak be nat displesede.
It ruethe me, yf I have you disesede ;
And mekely beseche I yow of pardoun,
Me submyttyng unto your correccioun.

I wote wele, first whan I withe yow mette,
I was fulle madde and spake fulle rudely ;
Thoughe I not slept, yit my spirite mette
Fulle angry dremes, thought fulle besily
Vexed my gost, so that no thyng wist I
What I to you spake, or what I thought,
But here and there I my self sought.

I pray you deemethe not that in dispite
I hade you, for age or povertie ;
I ment it not, but I stode in suche plite,
That it was no thyng likly unto me,
Thoughe ye hade knowen alle my privité,
That ye myght my greef thus han abreggede,
As ye han done, so sore I was agreggede.

Fader, as wisly God me save and spede,
Ye ben not he whom I wend han founde ;
Ye ben to me fulle welcome in this nede,
I wote wele in hye vertu ye abounde.
Your wise rede hope I hele shalle my wounde ;
My day of helthe is present, as me thynkethe,
Your comfort depe into myne hert synkethe.

Myne hert seethe that your benevolence,
Of routhe meved and of verray pitee,
Of my wo dothe his peyne and diligence
Me to releve of myne infirmittee.
O goode fader, blissede mote ye be,
That han suche routhe of my wofulle estate,
Whiche was welnye of helthe desperate.

But, fader, thoughe there be diversitee
Ful grete bitwene your excellent prudence
And the folye that reignethe in me,
Yit, God it wote, fulle litelle difference
Is there betwixt the hete and the fervence
Of love, whiche that to good folk ye have,
And myne, although ye deeme I hem deprave.

For yf that I the sothe shalle confesse,
The lak of olde mannes chereshyng
Is cause of the grounde of myne hevynesse,
And enchesoun of my wofulle mournyng;
That shalle ye knowe, yf it be your likyng
The cause to wite of myne adversité.”
“Yis, telle on, in the name of Crist,” seide he.

“Save first, or thow ony ferther procede,
O thyng of the wite wolde I, my sone.
Where dwellest thow?” “Fader, witheouten drede,
In the office of the privé-seel I wone,
To write there is my custume and wone
Unto the seel, and have twenty yere
And foure come Estren, and that is nere.”

“Now siker, sone, that is a faire tyme ;
 The token is goode of thy contynuaunce.
 Come hider, and sitte adoune here by me,
 For I mote rest a while, it is my penance ;
 To me this longe walke it dothe noisance
 Unto my croked lymes, feble and olde.
 That ben so stiffe unnethe I may hem folde.”

Whan I was sette adoune, as he me preide,
 “Telle on,” seide he ; “how is it withe the now?”
 And I began my tale, and thus I seide ;
 “My liege lord, the kyng whiche that is now,
 I fynde to me gracious ynowe ;
 God yild hym, he hathe for my longe servise
 Guerdonede me in covenable wise.

Henricus
 iiijth

In the escheker he of his special grace
 Hathe to me grauntede an annuitee
 Of twenty mark, while that I have lives space ;
 Myght I ay paide be of that duetee,
 It shulde stonde wel ynoughe withe me ;
 But paiement is harde to gete now adayes,
 And that me putte in many foule affrayes.

It gothe fulle streit and sharpe or I it have ;
 If I sure were of it to be satisfiede
 From yere to yere, than, so God me save,
 My depe rooted greef were remediede
 Sufficiently ; but how I shalle be guyede
 Hereafter, whan I no lenger serve,
 This hevieth me, so that I welnye sterve.

For syne that now, in myne age grene,
And beyng in court, withe grete peyne unnethe
Am paide, in elde and out of court I wene,
My purs for that may be a ferthyng shethe.
Loo, fader myne, this dullethe me to dethe;
Now God helpe alle, for but yf he me socoure,
My future yeres ben like to be soure.

Servise, I wote wele, is none heritage ;
Whan I am out of court another day,
As I mote whan upone me hastethe age,
And that I no lenger laboure may,
Unto my poore cote, it is no nay,
I mote me drawe, and my fortune abide,
And suffre the storme after the mery tide.

There preve I shalle the mutabilitie
Of this wrecchede worldes affeccioun ;
The whiche, whan youthe is past, begynneth to flee.
Frenship, adieu ; farewele, dileccioun ;
Age is putte out of your proteccioun ;
His looke unlusty, and his impotence,
Quenchethe your love and your benevolence.

That after-clap in my mynde so depe
Ifyched is, and hathe suche roote ycaught,
That alle my joye and myrthe is leide to slepe,
My ship is nye withe dispeire yfraught ;
They that not kan lernede be ne taught
By suche ensamples, smert as they han seen,
Me thynkethe certes over blynde ben.

Allas ! I see routhe and pitee exilede
Out of this lande ; alas ! compassioun ;
Whan shulle ye thre to us be reconciled ?
Your absence is my grevous compassioun ;
Resorte, I pray yow, to this regioun,
O, come agein, the lakke of your presence
Manacethe me to sterve in indigence.

O fikelle worlde, alas, thy variance !
How many a gentilman may men now see
That whilom in the werres olde of France
Honourede were and holde in grete chiertee
For her prowesse in armes, and plentee
Of frendes hade in youthe, and now, for shame,
Allas ! her frenship is crokede and lame.

Now age unorne away puttethe favour,
That floury youthe in his cesoun conquerede !
Now forgete is al manere manly labour,
Thurghe whiche fulle ofte thei her foes afferede !
Now ben the worthy men beten withe the yerde
Of nede, alas ! and none hathe of hem routhe ;
Pitee is beriede, I trowe, be my trouthe.

If she be dede, God have hir soule, I prey ;
And so shalle mo hereafter, I trowe.
He that pretendethe hym of most nobley,
If he hir lak, shalle wite and knowe
That crueltee hir foo may but a throwe
Hym suffre for to live in ony welthe,
But ever after in sorwe and unwelthe.

The olde men of armes that han knowe
By sight and by report her worthynesse,
Lete not myschief thus hem overthrowe,
Kithethe upon hem your manly gentilnesse;
Ye yonge men, that entren into prowesse
Of armes, eke your olde faders honoure,
Helpe hem your self withe some gode of youre.

Knyghthode, awake; thow slepest to longe;
Thy brother see ny diethe for myschief;
Awake, and rewe upon his peynes stronge.
Yf thow hereafter come into suche myschief,
Thow wolt fulle sore thirst after releef;
Thow art not sure what shalle the befalle;
Welthe is fulle slepir; beware, lest thow falle.

Thow that clomben art in hye honoures,
And hast this worldes welthe at thy devyse,
And bathest now in youtnes lusty floures,
Beware, I rede; thow stondest on the yce.
It hathe be seyne as wilfulle and as wise
As thow han slide, and thow no pitee
On other folk hast, who shalle rewe on the?

Leeve me wele, there is none erthely man
That hathe so stable a welthe but that it
May faile, do he what he do kan;
God, as hym lust, visitethe folk, and smyt.
Wherfore I deeme and hold it grace and wyt,
In hye estate man God and hym self knowe,
And releve him that myschief hathe doune throwe.

God wole that the nedy be releevde ;
It is one of the werkes of mercy ;
And sithen that men ben in armes preevede,
Ben into poverte falle, truly
Ye men of armes oughten specially
Helpe hem ; alas ! have ye no pitous bloode,
That may yow stire for to do goode ?

O now in earnest, dere fader myne,
Thise worthy men to me a myrroure shewe
Of slepir frenshippe and unto what fyne
I drawe shalle withein a yeres fewe.
Upon this wofulle thought I hak and hewe,
And muse so that I unto lite madde,
And lever dyen than liven I hadde.

In feithe, fader, my livelode, beside
The annuitee of whiche I above tolde,
May not excede yerly in no tide
Six mark ; that sitte to myne hert so colde,
Whan that I loke abouten and beholde
How scarce it is, yf that that other faile,
That I not glad kan be, but mourne and waile.

And as ferforthe as I kan deeme or gesse,
Whan that I at home dwelle in my poore cote,
I fynde shalle as frendely slipernesse
As tho men now done whos frendship is rote.
Not wold I rekke as muche as a mote,
Thoughe I no more hade of yerely encres,
So that I myght ay paide be doubtles.

Two parties of my life, and much more,
 I sure am, past is, I ne doute it nought;
 And yf that I shulde in my yeres hore
 Forgo my duetee that I have bought
 Withe my flesshe and my bloode, that hevy thought,
 Whiche I drede ay shalle falle, as I thynke,
 Me hastethe blive unto my pittes brynke.

Failyng, fader, myne annuitee,
 Foote hote in me crepethe desese and wo;
 For they that have before knowe me,
 Failyng goode, me wole faile also.
 Who no goode hathe, is ferre his frendes fro,
 In mukke is alle this worldes frendlyhede;
 My gost is wrappede in an hevy drede.

If that I hade of custume or this tyme
 Lyved in indigence and wrecchednesse,
 The lesse herafter shulde I sette by me;
 But in myne age wrastle in hardnesse,
 That withe hym strogled never in grenesse
 Of youthe, that mutacioun and chaunge
 Another day me seeme shulde alle straunge.

He that never knewe swetnesse of wele,
 Thoughe he it lak ay lesse hym greeve shalle,
 Than hym that hathe ben welle many yeres fele,
 And in effect hathe felt no greef at alle.
 O poverté, God me shilde fro thy falle;
 O dethe, thy stroke is more agreable
 To me than lyve a lyfe so myserable.

Sixe mark yerely, and no more but that,
 Fadir, to me me thynkethe is fulle lite,
 Consideryng how that I am nat
 In husbondrie not lernede worthe a myte;
 Scarsly knowe I to chare away the kyte,
 That me byreve wolde my polaile,
 And more axethe husbondery governaile.

Withe ploughe kan I not medle, ne withe harwe,
 Ne wote nat what lond goode is for what corne,
 And for to lade a carte or fille a barwe,
 To whiche I never usedwas aforne,
 My bak unbuxom hathe suche thyng forsworne,
 At instaunce of writyng his werreyour,
 That stoupyng hathe hym spilte withe his labour.

Ars non
 habet inimi-
 cum nisi ig-
 norantem.

Many men, fader, wenen that writyng
 No travaile is, they holde it but a game;
 An art hathe no foo but suche folk unkunnyng;
 But who so luste to disporte hym in that same,
 Lete hym contynew, and he shalle fynde it grame;
 It is welle gretter laboure than it seemethe,
 The blynde man of colours wrong deemethe.

Cecus non
 judicat de
 coloribus; et
 nota hic de
 scriptoribus.

A writer mote thre thynges to hym knette,
 And in tho may be no disseveraunce;
 Mynde, eye, and honde, none may from other flitte,
 But in hem mote be joynte contynuaunce.
 The mynde alle hole witheoute variaunce
 On eye and honde awaite mote alway,
 And they two eke on hym, it is no nay,

Who so shalle write, may not holde a tale
Withe hym and hym, ne syng this ne that ;
But alle his wittes grete and smale
There most appeere, and holde hem thereat,
And setthe speke he ne may ne syng nat ;
But bothe two he nedes mote forbere,
His labour to hym is the elengere.

Thise artificers see I day by day,
In the hottest of alle her besynesse,
Talken and syng, and make game and play,
And forthe her labour passethe withe gladnesse ;
But we labouren in travaillous stilnesse,
We stoupe and stare upon the shepes skyn,
And kepe most our songe and our wordes in,

Wrytyng also dothe grete annoies thre,
Of whiche fulle fewe taken hede
Save we our self, and thise loo ! thei be.
Stomak is one, whom stoupyng out of drede
Annoiethe sore, and to our bakkes nede
Mote it be grevous, and the thirde our eyen,
Upone the white mochille for to dryen,

What man that twenty yere and more
In wrytyng hathe contynuede, as have I,
I dar wele sey it smertethe hym fulle sore
In every veyne and place of his body ;
And yen most it grevethe truly.
Of ony craft that man kan ymagyne,
Fader, in feithe, it sete hathe welny me.

Loo, fader, tolde have I the substaunce
Of alle my greef, so as I kan telle ;
But wele I wote it hathe be grete penaunce
To you with me so long to dwelle ;
I am right siker it hathe ben an helle,
You for to herken me thus jangle and clappe,
So lewdely in my termes I me wrappe.

But natheles I trust to your pacience,
Receyve wole in gree my wordes alle,
And what I have mysseide of necligence,
Ye wole it lete aside slippe and falle.
My fader dere, unto your grace I calle,
Ye wote my greef, now rede me for the best,
Witheouten whom my gost kan have no rest."

"Now, sone myne, hast thou alle seide and spoken
That the goode likethe?" "Ye, fader, as now."
"Sone, yf ought elles in thyne hert be loken,
Unlok it blive, come forthe, what seist thou?"
"Fader, I kan nomore telle yow
Than I beforn have spoken and saide."
"A Goddes half, sone, I am wele apaide.

Conceyved have I that thow grete fere hast
Of povertie, for to falle in the snare ;
Thow hast therynne caught so depe a tast,
That of alle joye thow art void and bare ;
Thow nye dispeirede art of alle welfare,
And the stroke of povertie art thow fer fro ;
For shame ! why makest thow alle this wo ?

I putte cas, as God therfro the kepe,
 Thow were yfalle in indigent povert ;
 Shuldest thow grucche and thyne annoye bewepe ?
 Nay, be thow riche or poore, sike or quert,
 God thanke alwey of thyne ese and of thyne smert ;
 Pride the not for no prosperitee,
 Ne hevye the not for none adversitee.

Povert hathe in hym self ynow grevaunce,
 Withouten that that man hym more purchase ;
 Who so it takethe in pacient suffraunce,
 It is fulle plesaunt before Cristes face.
 And who so grucchethe, forfetethe that grace
 That he shulde have, yf that his pacience
 Withstode the greef and made it resistance.

My sone, as witnessethe holy scripture,
 Discrete and honest povert manyfolde
 Comendede ys ; Crist hym self, I the ensure,
 To love and preche and teche it hathe wolde.
 He did alle this ; be thou never so bolde,
 Agein povert hereafter ne grucche, I rede,
 For ferthermore in holy writte I rede.

Augustinus.
 Volve vitam
 Salvatoris a
 tempore sue
 nativitatis
 usque ad
 crucis pati-
 bulum, et non
 invenies in ea
 nisi stigmata
 paupertatis ;
 numquid
 ergo homo sit
 melior Deo,
 etc.

Beholde the lyfe of our Savyour,
 Right fro the tyme of his nativitee,
 Unto his dethe, as seithe myne auctour,
 And token in it shalt thow none fynde or see
 But of povert, withe whiche contente was he.
 Is man better than God ? shalle man eschewe
 Suche lyfe, sithen God that same wolde ay sewe ?

Bernardus.
Nonne
magna abusio
est, et nimis
magna, ubi
dives esse
velit vilis ver-
miculus prop-
ter quem
Deus majesta-
tis et dominus
Sabaoth dig-
natus est vo-
luntarie pau-
per fieri, etc.
Seneca in
proverbiis.
Securus
enim a noc-
turnis furi-
bus dormit
pauper, etsi
claustra
non munit;
diviti vero
opes sue la-
tronis semper
ymaginantur
occursum,
etc.

Fy ! it is to grete an abusioun,
To see a man, that is but wormes mete,
Desire richesse and grete possessioun,
Where as our Lorde God wolde entermete
Of no richesse, he deynd it not to gete ;
He lyved poorely and poverte ches,
That myght have be fulle riche, it is no les.

The poore man slepethe fulle sikerly
On nyghtes, thoughe his dore be not shette,
Where as the riche abedde besily
Castethe and ymagynethe in his witte,
That necessarie unto hym is it
Barres and lokkes stronge for to have,
His goode from theves forto kepe and save.

And whan the dede slepe fallethe atte laste
On hym, he dremethe theves come in,
And on his coffres knocke, and ley on faste,
And some of hem unpyke withe a sotelle gynne,
And up is broke lok, haspe, barre, and pynne,
And in the hande gothe, and the bagge outtakethe ;
For sorwe of whiche, out of his slepe he wakethe.

And up he risethe, fote and hond tremblyng,
As that hym shoke the palsye ;
And after that, without tarying,
Unto his coffre he dressethe hym on hye ;
Or he come there, he is in poynte to dye,
He it undothe, and openethe, for to see
Yf that his fals goddes therein be.

Idem Seneca.
Simili po-
testas sine
timore peri-
culi nunquam
est, si pau-
pertas sem-
per segura
est, etc.

He dredethe to fynde it as he drempte.
This worldes power and riche abundaunce
Of drede of perile never ben exempte,
But in poverté is ay siker constaunce;
Who holdethe him content hathe suffisaunce.
And, sone, by my rede thow shalt do so,
And by desire of goode sette not a slo.

Wilfulle poverté in princes auncien
So ferforthe was, that they desirede more
Good loos than goode; but now adayes men
Renne and desiren after mukke so sore,
That her gode fame is leide a water thore,
And they rek never how longe it slepe,
Or thoughe it drowne, so they gode may kepe.

Of Cesile somtyme there was a kyng
Withe erthen vesselle servede at his table;
And men fast wondrede upone this thyng,
And seide unto hym it was not honourable
To his estate, ne no thyng comendable,
Axyng hym why that hym luste to be served so.
To whiche demaunde he answerde tho:

He seide, 'Thoughe I kyng be of Cesile,
A potter was my fader, it is no nay;
How longe I shalle endure and what while
In my prosperitee, knowe I ne may;
Fortunes variaunce I drede alway;
Right as she made me clymbe on hight,
Sodeynly so she may make me alight.

I thynke alwey on my nativitee,
And on my poore lynage, and on my bloode ;
Erthen vesselle to suche a man as me
Fulle sittynge is, and fulle acceptable and goode.'
O fewe ben there now left of the broode
That he came of; he lovede bette profite
Comune, than his avauntage or delite.

How seyst thou by Affrican Scipioun ?
Affrican clept, for that he Affrik wan ;
To poverté had he suche affeccioun
Of his owen free wille and lust, that, whan
He deide, no goode had this worthy man,
Wherewithe his body in the erthe to bryng,
But the comon coste made his enterynge.

Beforne the Senat was he borne on honde
Ones, after that he Affrik wonnen had,
That he was riche, as they coude undirstonde,
Of gold, to whiche, with wordes sobre and sadde,
Answered he thus, ' Though I be feble and badde,
The sothe is to your subjeccioun
I gate Affrik, of that have I renoune.

My name was alle that I there gate,
To wyne honour was onely the purpose
Whiche that I tooke; or that I come thereate,
Other good had I none than riche lose ;
For alle the good there was, open or close,
Myne hert myght nat so wele contente,
As the renoun onely that I there hente.'

Of covetise he was no thyng culpable ;
He sette not therby, thow maist wele see.
Fy on the ! gredynesse insaciable,
Of many a man that kan not content be
Of mukke, althoughe never so muche have he ;
The kynde is ever on wrecchede covetise,
To coveite ay and have and not suffise.

I wolde every knyght did now the same,
And were of goode nomore coveitous
Than he was ; what ! to gete a noble fame
To knyghthode is tresour most precious.
But I was never so aventrous
Renoun to wynne by swerdes conquest,
For I was bredde in a pesible nest.

Upone my bak came never habirgeoun,
Ne my knyfe drowe I never in no violence ;
I may not countirfete Scipioun
In armes, ne his worthy excellence
Of wilfulle poverte ; but of indigence
I am also riche as ever was ony man,
Suffre it in pacience yf that I kan.

No richer am I than thow maist see,
Of myne have I no thyng to take to ;
I live of almesse, yf it stode withe the
So streit and livedest as that I do,
I see thow woldest sorwe suche two
As I, but thow hast for to lyven one
A poore lyfe, and suche have I none.

Proverbiis30. Salamon yafe counseille, men shulden prey
 Mendicita- Two thynges unto God, in sothefastnesse ;
 tem et divi- Now herken, sone, he bade men thus to sey,
 cias ne dede- ' Enhaunce thow me, Lord, to no richesse,
 ris michi, sed Ne by myserie me so sore oppresse
 tamen victui meo tribue That nede for to begge me compelle.'
 necessaria, In his proverbes thus gan he telle.
 etc.

But this povert men counceilede he
 For to desire that was necessarie
 To fode and clothe, dredyng lest plentee
 Of gode hem myght bryng to myserie,
 And from the knowlechyng of God to varie,
 And lest smert rede hem made God renye.
 Now beware, sone, lest thow folye.

Sone, in this meen povert hold I the,
 Save that thow canst not take it fulle wele ;
 What thoughe thow leese thyne annuitee ?
 Yit maist thow live on that other dele,
 Thoughe not fulle delicate shalle be thy mele ;
 Of six mark yerely, mete and drynke and clothe
 Thow gete maist, my child, witheouten othe."

" Ye, fader myne, I am not so parfite,
 To take it so ; I have hade habundaunce
 Of welefare ay, and now stonde I in plite
 Of skarstee, it were a grete penaunce ;
 For God shilde me fro that streyt chaunce ;
 Sixe mark yerely to skars is to sustene
 The charges that I have, as I wene.

Towe on my dystaf have I for to spynne
More, fader myne, than ye wote of yit;
Whiche ye shalle knowe, or I fro you twynne,
Yf your good luste be for to heren it.
But for as muche as it not to me sit
Your tale for to interupte ne breke,
Herafter therof wole I to yow speke.

Yit o worde, fader; I have herde men seyne,
Who so no goode hathe, that he can no goode.
And that fynde I, a platte sothe and a pleyne;
For, althoughe myne hede, undir my hode,
Was never wise, yete while it with me stode,
So that I hade silver resonable,
My litelle witte was somewhat covenable.

But now, for that I have but a lite,
And likly am herafter to have lesse,
My dulle witte kan not to me profite;
I am so adradde of moneyes scantnesse
That myne hert is alle nakede of lightnesse.
Wisse me to gete a golden salve,
And what I have, I wole it with you halve."

"Sone, as for me, nother avaunt narere,
But yf disese algates shalle betide,
For to be pacient I rede thow lere,
For ony thyng withholde hir on thy side.
My rede wole it not, sone, fro the hide,
Make of necessitee, I rede, vertu;
For better rede kan I none, by Jhesu.

Quem diligo
castigo.

My sone, they that swymmen in richesse
Contynuelly, and have prosperitee,
And never han felt but welfulle swetnesse,
Unscourgede ay of any adversitee,
Lest God forgete hem oughten ferdfulle be ;
Sitthe God in holy writ seithe in this wise,
' Whom so I love, hym wole I chastise.'

Seinte Ambroses legende seithe how he
Ones to Rome-warde toke his viage,
And in Tuske towarde that contree
Withe a riche hoost he toke his herbegage ;
Of whom as blive faire in his langage
Of his estate enqueren he began,
And to that answerede anone this man.

' Right at my lust have I alle this worldly welthe,
Myne estate hathe be good and yit is ;
Richesse have I, and bodily helthe,
Was never thyng yit me happede amys.'
And seint Ambrose astoned sore of this,
Anone righ rownede unto his companye,
' Sires, it is tyme that we hens hye.

I am adredde God is not in this place ;
Go we fast hens, lest that his vengeaunce
Falle on us.' And than withein litelle space
After they were gone shope this chaunce ;
The grounde clafe and made disseveraunce,
And in sanke man, womman, childe, hous, and alle
That to hym pertenede, grete and smalle.

Whan this came to Ambroses audience,
He seide unto his felyship thus,
'Loo, bretherne, seethe here in experience,
How merciably our Lorde Jhesus
Of his benigne grace hathe spared us ;
He sparethe hem that unwelthy here ben,
And to the welthy dothe as that ye seen.'

Thy lyfe, my sone, is but a chery feire ;
Worldly richesse, have ever in thy memorie,
Shalle passe alle, loke it never on the so faire ;
While thow art here in this worlde transitorie,
Enable the to wyne eternalle glorie,
Where no poverté is, but richesse
Of joye and blisse and vertuous gladnesse.

O thyng telle I the, sone, that is sothe ;
Thoughe a man hade as muche as men han alle,
But vertu that goode guye, alle he mysdothe,
Alle that swetnes turne shalle into galle.
Whan that richesse is on a man falle,
Yf it be wronge dispendede or myskept,
Another day it shalle fulle sore be wept.

Some riche is large, and his goode mysdespendethe
In mayntenaunce of synne and of harlotrye ;
To whiche despenses his luste attendethe ;
And on that other part his nygardrye
Suffrethe his neighbore by hym sterve and dye,
Rather than withe a ferthyng hym releeve.
The two condicions ben to reprove.

Who so most hathe, most shalle of answere ;
A day shalle come some men perchaunce
Desire shalle he never hade ben richer
Than here han hade his bare sustenaunce.
Whan the day comethe of ire and of vengeaunce,
Than shulle men see how in this worlde, I gesse,
Richesse is poverté, and poverté richesse.

Whilere, my sone, tolde I not to the
What habundaunce in my youthe I hade of goode,
And how me blent prosperitee,
That what God was I not undirstoode ?
But ay while that I in my welthe stode,
After my fleshely luste my lyfe I ladde,
And of his wreche no thyng I me dradde.

And, as I seide, he smote me withe the stroke
Of poverté, in whiche I contynu yit ;
Whos smert my goode bloode first so sore soke,
Or that I was acqueynted wele withe it,
That nye it hade refte fro me my wit ;
But sithen, thanke I God, in pacience
I have it take, and shalle, for myne offence.

Yf the luste flee, that povert dothe engendre,
First synne eschewe, and God honoure and drede ;
Also, for thy lyvelode is scars and sclendre,
Spende not to large, I the rede.
Measure is goode, lete hir the gye and lede ;
Be ware of outrage and be sobre and wise,
Thus thou exclude hym, by myne advyse.

Natheles thou maiste agein me replye,
To some folk, thoughe they done alle as I sey,
Ageyn poverte it is no remedye,
They mowe it not eschewe by no wey.
I graunte wele ; but than take kepe, I prey,
The juggementes of God ben to us hidde,
Take alle in gree, so is thy vertu kidde.

To the plesaunce of God thou the confourme,
Aboute that be besy and ententyfe,
That thou mysdo not, but blive thou it refourme ;
Suche a labour the kithe here in thy life,
That God thy soule, whiche that is his wyfe,
Rejoise may, for it is to hym due,
And his shalle be, but thou the devorce sue.

O thow, fortune, fals and deceyvable,
Fulle sothe is it, yf thow doost a goode dede,
Thow not purposest it shalle be durable,
Of goode entent shalle it not procede.
Wele ought us thy promysse blynde to drede.
He slipirly stant whom that thow enhauncest,
For sodeynly thow hym disavauncest.

Hade I done, sone, as I the counceile,
Whan that fortunes deceyvable chere
Laughed on me, than hade I not, saunz faile,
Ben in this wrecched plite as thow seest here.
Not knewe my thought her chaungeable manere ;
For whan I sate on hye upone hir whele,
Hir gladsome looke made me truste hir wele.

I coude for no thyng han wende or deemede
That she aboute bare double visage ;
I wende she hade ben suche as she seemede ;
But natheles yit is it avauntage
To hym that wofulle is, that hir usage
Is for to flitte fro place to place,
Hir variaunce is to some folk grace.

Whom so that nede greveth or travaillethe,
Hir chaunge is unto hym no greef or wo ;
But the contrarie of that no thyng availethe,
As whan a man is wele, putte hym therfro,
What shulle men calle hir frende or elles foo ?
I note but calle hir frende whan that she esethe,
And calle hir foo whan she man displesethe.

But ye so calle hir shalle a siker name ;
Men mote hir calle my lady chaungeable ;
For hardely she is that self same ;
A ! nay, I gabbe, I am unresonable,
She is my lady stedfast and stable,
For I endure in povertes distresse,
And she not luste releeve my duresse.

Imagyne why that not hir liste
Withe me now dele, age is colde and drye,
And whan tho two ben to a lady wiste,
And that I poore am for the maistrye,
Suche a man is unlusty to hir eye,
And wers to grope ; strawe for impotence !
She loveth yonge folk and large of despence.

And this that I have of fortune seide,
Is but a jape, as who seithe, or a knak.
Now I a while bourded have and pleide,
Resorte I wole to that I first spak;
Beholde and cast thou thyne eye abak,
What thou god hast agilt in tyme past,
Correcte it, and to do so ofte be agast.

Of holy chirche, my sone, I conceyve
As yit ne hast thow none advauncement;
Ye courteours, fulle often ye deceyve
Your soules, for the desirous talent
Ye han to goode, and for that thow art brent
Withe covetise, now peraventure
Onely for mukke thow lernest soules cure.

Fulle many men knowe I that yane and gape
After some fatte and riche benefice;
Chirche ne prebende unnethe hem may escape,
But they as blive it hent up and trice.
God graunte they accepte hem for the office,
And not for the profite that by him hongethe,
For that conceyte not to preesthode longethe.

Adayes now, my sone, as men may see,
O chirche to o man may nat suffise;
But algate he mote have pluralitee,
Elles he kan not lyve in no wise.
Ententyfly he kepethe his servise
In court, ther his labour shalle not moule,
But to his cure loketh he fulle foule.

Thoughe that his chauncelle roof be alle totorne,
And on the hye awtere reyne or snewe,
He rekkethe not, the cost may be forborne
Cristes hous to repaire or make newe;
And thoughe ther be fulle many a vicious hewe
Undir his cure, he takethe of it no kepe:
He rekkethe never how rusty ben his shepe.

The oynement of holy sermonyng
Hym lothe is upone hem for to dispende;
Some persone is so thredbare of kunnyng
That he kan not, thoughe he hym wise pretende,
And he that kan may not his hert bende
Therto, but from his cure he hym absentethe,
And what therof comethe he gredily hentethe.

How he dispendethe it, be as it be may;
For unto that am I no thyng pryvee;
But wele I wote as nyce, fresshe, and gay
Some of hem ben as borelle folkes be,
And that unsittyng is to her degree;
Hem ought to be myrroures of sadnesse,
And weyve jolitee and wantonesse.

But natheles I wote wele there ageyne,
That many of hem guye hem as hem oughte;
And elles it were grete pitee certeyne.
But what man wilt thou be for hym the boughte?"
"Fader, I may not chese, I whilom thought
Have ben a preest, now past is the raas."
"Than art thow a wedded man percaas."

“ Ye, sothely, fader myne, right so I am.
I gased longe first, and waitede faste
After some benefice, and whan none cam,
By processe I weddede me atte laste.
And God it wote it sore me agaste
To bynde me where I was at my large ;
But done it was, I toke on me the charge.”

“ A ! sone, I have aspyede, and now see,
This is the towe that thou spakest of right now.”

“ Now, by the roode, fader, sothe sey ye.”

“ Ye, sone myne, thou shalle do wele ynow,
Whan ended is my tale, than shalt thou
Be putte in suche a wey as shalle the plese,
And to thyne hert do comfort and ese.

So longe, sone, as in the privé seel
Dwelt hast, and woldest so fayn han be avauncede
Unto some chirche or this, I deme wele,
That God wolde not have the enhauncede
In no suche plite, I holde the wele chauncede ;
Gode wote and knowethe every mannes entent ;
He for thy best a wyfe unto the sent.

Yf that thou haddest percas ben a preste,
Thou woldest han also wantonly the guyede
As dothe the nycest of hem that thou seeste ;
And God forbode thou haddest the tiede
Therto, but yf thyne hert myght han plyed
For to observe it wele, be glad and mery,
That thou art as thou art, God thank and hery.

The ordres of preesthode and of wedlokke
Ben bothe vertuous, witheouten fable ;
But undirstonde the holy yokke
Of preesthode is, as it is resonable
That it so be, the more comendable ;
The lesse of hem of meede hath abundaunce,
Men han merite after her governaunce.

But how ben thy felawes loked to
At home ? ben not thei wele benefisede ?”
“ Yis, fader, yis ; there is one clept Nemo
Helpethe hem, by hym ben they cherisede.
Nere he, they were poorely chevysede ;
He hem avauncethe, he fully her frende is,
Save onely hym they han but fewe frendis.

So many a man as they this many a yere
Han writen fore, fynde kan I none ;
So gentill, or of her estate so dere,
That ones luste for hem to ride or gone,
Ne for hem speke a worde, but doumbe as a stone
They stonden, where as he speche myght availe,
For suche folke is unlusty to travaile.

But yf a wight have a cause to sue
To us, some lordes man shalle undirtake
To sue it out, and that that is us due
For our labour he deynethe not to us take ;
He seithe his lord thanke us wole he make ;
It touchithe hym, it is a man of his,
Where the revers of that, God wote, sothe is.

His lettre he takethe, and forthe gothe his wey,
And biddethe us to douten us no thyng
His lorde shalle thanke us another day.
And yf we have for to sue to the kyng,
His lord may have there alle his axyng;
We shall be spedde as ferre as our bille
Wole specifie the effect of our wille.

What shulle we do? We dare none argument
Make ageyn hym, but faire and wele hym trete,
Lest he report amys and make us shent;
To have his wille we soffren hym and lete.
Hard is it to be holden suspect withe the grete;
His tale shalle be bileevede and not oures,
And that conclusioun to us fulle soure is.

And whan the matere is to the ende brought
Of the straunger for whom the suyt hathe be,
Than is he knowen to the lord right nought,
He is to hym as unknowe as we;
The lord ne wote not of alle this soteltee,
Ne we ne dar not lete hym of it knowe,
Les our compleynt our self overthrowe.

And where this bribour hathe no peny paide
In our office, he seithe behynde our bakke,
'Here paide I nought, what thus ben we betraide,
And disclaundrede and putte in wite and lakke,
Full giltles and eke by suche a knakke?'
The man for whom the suyte is, is deceyvede,
He weneth we have of his gold receyved.

Fulle many suche pursuers there ben,
That for us take, and yeve us not a myte.
This makethe us that we may not thene.
Eke where as lordes bidde her men us quyte,
When that for hem self we laboure and write,
And ben allowede for her payement,
Our handes ben therof fulle innocent.

I sey nat alle lordes men thus do,
That sue unto our court, but many, I sey,
Han done thus ofte; loo! my fadir, loo!
Thus bothe our thanke and lucre gothe away.
God yeve hem sorwe that thus withe us pley;
For we fynden it earnest atte fulle;
This maketh us of our labour to dulle.

Now, fader myne, how thynkethe you hereby?
Suppose ye that this sittethe us not sore?"
"Yes, certes, sone, that fulle wele wote I.
Hast thou seide, sone? wilt thou ought sey more?"
"Nay, sire, as now; but ay upone your lore
I herken also besily as I best kan."
"Sone, than lete us speke as we began.

Sey on the sothe, I pray the hertely,
What was the cause why thou toke a wyfe?
Was it to gete children lawfully,
And in clenness to lede thy lyfe;
Or first for mukke, what was thy motyfe?"
"Fader, no thyng wole I queynte make;
Onely for love I chees hir to my make."

“Sone, what holdest thou love, I the pray ?
Thou deemest luste and love convertible,
Percas, as whan the liste with thy wyfe to play,
Thy conceyt holdethe it goode and lisible
To done ; art thou ought, sone myne, sensible
In whiche cas that thou oughtest the forbere,
And in whiche not ? kanst thou to this answeere ?”

“Fader, me thynkethe alle this is goode ynow ;
She is my wyfe, who may therof me lette ?”
“Nay, sone, abide, and I shalle telle how,
Yf that thow ought by Goddes drede sette,
Thre causes ben, whiche I wole unshette,
And open anone, why thow shalt with hir dele :
Now, herken, sone, for thy soules hele.

The first cause, of procreacioun
Of children is to Goddes honour ;
To kepe the eke fro fornicacioun
The next is ; and the third, of that labour
Yilde thy dette in whiche thou art dettour
Unto thy wyfe ; and other ententes alle,
Ley out a parte for ought that may befalle.

For thise causes thou hir use muste ;
And for none other, on peyne of dedely synne.”
“Fader, yit now me thought ageyn luste
Ye helden, and children begoten therynne
Where is no luste.” “O sone, or that we twynne,
Yf that thow wolt undirstonde how that I
Not holde ageinst lust alle uttirly.

I wote wele leefulle luste is necessarie ;
Witheout that may be none engendrure.
But use luste for luste onely contrarie
To Goddes hestes is, for I the ensure,
Thoughe thow take of it litelle hede or cure,
A man may withe his wyfe do lecherye ;
The entent is alle ; be ware of folye.

Wedded folk may leden holy lyfe ;
For thoughe her flesshely lust hem assaile,
And stire hem often, the man to the wyfe,
And she to hym, maken suche bataile,
And strive ageyn her flesshe, that he shalle faile
Of his purpose ; but som folk as bestes
Her luste ay folowen ; in hem none arest is.

Adayes now there is suche governaunce
Amonge hem that han paramours and wives,
That, for luste of her wommen and plesaunce,
Not suffisen hem metes restoratives,
But they receyve eke provocatives
To engendre hem luste, feyntyng her nature,
And suche thyng causethe hasty sepulture,

This knowe I sothe is, and knewe it ferne agone ;
And they that so done hyely God offende.
Suche folk holde I homycides everichone ;
They sleen hem self or God do for hem sende.
My sone, on Goddes half I the defende
Suche medicynes that thow not receyve,
Syn they God wratthen and soule of man deceyve.

Passe over this, thou seidest the enchesoun,
Why that thou tooke upon the mariage
Was unto none other entencioun,
But love onely the sette in that corage;
Now, son myne, I am a man of age,
And many weddede couples have I knowe,
None of myne age many mo I trowe.

But I ne sawe, ne I ne spied, never
Also longe as I have lyved yit,
The love of hem departen or dissever
That for goode love bounden were and knyht,
God loveth the love, and he wole further it;
At longe rennyng love best shalle preeve;
Thus hathe it ben, and ay shalle, I beleve.

But they that marien hem for mukke and goode
Onely, and not for love of the persone,
Not have I wist they ony while stooode
In rest; but of strife is there suche wone,
As for the more part, betwixt hem everychone,
That alle her lives they leden in hevynesse;
Suche is the fruyte to wedde for richesse.

Amonge the riche also is an usage,
Ecche of hem her childe unto other wedde,
Thoughe they be al to yonge and tendir of age,
No wher ny ripe to go to bedde;
And her conceyte in love is leide to wedde,
Men wete it wele, it is no questioun,
Til yeres come of her discrecioun.

And whan thei have the knowleche of resoun,
 Than may they nothir fynde in her hert
 To love other ; alle out of sesoun
 They knyt ben, that into wedlok so stert.
 This makethe many a couple for to smert.
 O covetise, thyne is alle the gilte
 Of this, and mo yit deceyve thou wylte.

Also they that for luste chesen her make
 Onely, as other while it is usage,
 Watte wele that whan her luste is overshake,
 Therwithe wole her loves hete aswage ;
 Than is to hem an helle her mariage ;
 Than they desiren for to ben unknytte,
 And to that ende studie in alle her witte.

Cessante
 causa, etc.

Styntyng the cause, theeffect styntethe eke ;
 No lenger forster, no lenger lemman.
 Love on luste groundede is not worthe a leeke ;
 But who for vertu weddethe a womman,
 And nother for mukke ne for luste, that man
 The fourme due of matrimonye suethe,
 And soules hurte and bodyes greef eschuethe.

I dar not medle of lordes mariages,
 How they hem knytte her makes unsene ;
 But as to me it seemethe suche usages
 Not worthe a strawe, for, also mote I thene,
 Reportethe not so siker jugges ben,
 As man to see the wommans persone,
 In whiche choice lete man hym self alone.

Weddyng at home in this lond holsome were,
 So that man hym weddede duely ;
 To see the flesshe first, it may no thyng dere,
 And hym avise how hym thynkethe therby
 Or he be knytte ; loo, this conceyte have I,
 In this matere depper coude I go,
 But passe I wole and slippe away therfro.

Now sithen thou hast, to my juggement,
 The maryede unto Goddes plesaunce,
 Be a trewe husbonde, and by myne assent
 Kepe thy bonde, beware the of combraunce
 Of the feende, whiche withe many a circumstaunce
 Fulle slyly hym castethe the to wrappe and wrye,
 To stire the for to done advoutrye.

Scriptum est,
 Adulterare,
 sponte per-
 jurare, et
 hominem
 sponte occi-
 dere, equipa-
 rantur. Jero-
 nimus dicit,
 Adulterium
 secundum lo-
 cum habet in
 penis.

Advoutrye and perjurye and wilfulle slaughtir,
 The booke seithe, lokkede ben and of o peyse they wey.
 Ware advoutrye, it is no pley ne laughtir
 To done it, flee also the other twey.
 For thus wote I wele, seint Jerome kan sey,
 In peyne advoutrye hathe the seconde place ;
 Tho thre to eschewe God the graunte grace.

Genesis xij^o
 Cumque
 prope esset
 ut ingrederetur
 Egiptum,
 dixit Saray
 uxori sue,
 Novi quod
 pulcra es
 mulier, et
 quod cum te
 viderint

I in the bible rede how that Abraham
 To Egipte went, withe his wyfe Sarray ;
 And whan they ny unto Egipte cam,
 Thus seide he unto his wyfe by the way,
 ‘ I wote wele thow art faire, it is no nay ;
 Whan they of Egipt see the, there wole they seye
 Thow art his wyfe, and for the do me deye.

Egipcii, dic-
turi sunt, uxor
illius es, et in-
terficient me,
et te reserva-
bunt; dic,
ergo, obsecro,
quod soror
mea sis, ut
bene sit michi
propter te, et
vivat anima
mea ob gra-
tiam tui, etc.

Thei wole quelle me, and the reserve;
Forthy unto hem sey, I the beseche,
Thow art my suster, leste I for the sterve;
Thus may I wele ben esed by thy speche,
And thus maist thow lengthe my lyve and eche.
And whan they into Egipte entrede were,
The Egipcians fast behelden here,

And of hir beautee maden her reporte
To Pharao, and she as blive is take
Into his hous, and done is grete comforte
Unto Abraham for this wommans sake;
And grete disporte and chere men hem make.
But for Saray grevously Pharao
Punysshed was, and eke his hous therto.

Pharao clept Abraham, and hym obreide,
'What is that thou hast done unto me?
Why naddest thow tolde to me,' he seide,
'How that this womman wyfe was to the?
For what encheson seidest thou,' koth he,
'She was thy suster? take thy wyfe here,'
Koth he, 'and bothe go your wey yfere.'

The bible makethe no maner of mynde
Whethir that Pharao lay by hir, or nought;
But looke in Lyre, and there shalt thou fynde
For to han do it was he in fulle thought;
But God preserved hir, he myght nought;
And sithen for that wille God hym punysshed so,
How shalle the dede unpunysshed go?

Also he not knewe that she a wyfe was ;
 Now than they that wives wetyngly
 Taken and holden, and with hem done trespas,
 Stonden in harde plite, sone, beware, rede I.

Scriptum est,
 Non solum
 eternaliter
 verumeciam
 temporaliter
 in vita ista
 adulter mani-
 festus est
 punitus.

Genesis xx°.
 Redde ux-
 orem viro suo;
 si autem no-
 lueris, scito
 quod morte
 morieris tu et
 omniaque tua
 sunt. Item,
 Concluserat
 Dominus om-
 nem vulvam
 domus
 Abymalech
 propter Saram
 uxorem
 Abrahe, etc.

Yf thou therynne agilte, eternally
 Thou smert shalt, and in lyfe present
 Han sharp adversitee and grete turment.

And to Abymeleche God bade he sholde
 Yilde Sarra also to hir husbonde ;
 For he and his eechone, yf he ne wolde,
 Shulden be dede, he did hem undirstonde.
 Take heede ay, sone, that thow clere ay stonde ;
 For God estopped eke the concepcioun
 Of every womman of his mansioun.

Ne that she was a wyfe wist he no thyng,
 Ne nought hir knewe in no fleshly folye.
 My goode sone, rede of David the kyng,
 How he Bersabee tooke, wyfe of Urye,
 Into his hous and did advoutrye ;
 And how he made Urye slayne to be,
 And how therfore punysshede was he.

ij^{do} Regum,
 capitulis de-
 cimo et unde-
 cimo.

How was the tribe also of Benjamyn
 Punysshed and putte to distruccioun,
 For advoutrye whiche they lyvede yn
 In the abhominable oppressioun
 Of Levytes wyfe, the mensioun
 Therof is made, yf ye looke holy writte,
 In Judicum fulle redily it sitte.

Judicum vi-
 cesimo,
 Egressi sunt,
 etc.

Deutro. xxij.
Maledictus
qui dormierit
cum uxore
proximi sui,
etc.
Ad Cor. vto.
Neque forni-
carii, neque
idolis servi-
entes, neque
adulteri, reg-
num Dei pos-
sidebunt.

Who so lithe with his neighbores wyfe
Is cursed, and who is ony advoutour,
The kyngdome faile shalle of endeles lyfe;
Of that shalle he be no possessour.
Allas ! this likerous dampnable errour
In this lond hathe so large a threde ysponne,
That wers peple is there none undir the sonne.

Of suche stories couthe I telle an hepe,
But I suppose thise shulle suffise,
And forthy, sone, wole I make a lepe
Fro hem, and go wole I to the emprise
That I first tooke, yf thou the wele avise;
When I the mette and sawe thyne hevynesse,
Of comforte, sone, made I the promesse.

And of a trewe man beheest is dette.”
“Fader, God yilde it you, and so ye diden,
Ye highten me in ese for to sette.”
“Now, sone, thoughe I longe have abiden,
Thy greef is not out of mynde sliden;
To thy grevaunce wole I now resorte,
And shewe the how thou the shalt comforte.

In short wise, this is of thy greef enchesoun,
Of thyne annuitee the payement,
Whiche for thy longe service is thy guerdoun,
Thou dredest whan thou art fro court absent
Shalle be restreyned, syn thou now art present,
Unnethe maist thou it gete, it is so streyte;
Thus undirstode I, sone, thy conceyte.

For of thy livelode is it the substaunce ;
Is it not thus ? ” “ Yis, sothely, fader, it.”
“ Now, sone, to remedie this grevaunce
Kanst thou no weyes fynde in thy wit ? ”
“ No, certes, fader, never coude I yit.”
“ May no lordship, sone, the availe
For alle thy longe service and thy travaile ? ”

“ What ? fader, what ? lordes han for to done
So muche for hem self, that my matere
Out of her mynde slippethe away sone ;
The worlde is not suche now, my fader dere,
As ye han seen ; farewele, frendly manere.
So God me amende, I am alle destitute
Of my livelode, God be my refute !

I am unto so streyte a poynte ydrive,
Of thre conclusions mote I chese one ;
Or begge, or stele, or sterve, I am yshrive
So nye that other wey see I none.
Myne hert is as dede as ony stone.
Nay, there I faile, a stone no thyng ne feelethe ;
But thought me brennethe and fresyngly keelethe.

To begge, shame is myne impediment ;
I wote wele rather shulde I dye and sterve ;
And stelthes guerdoun is suche payment,
That never thynke I his wages deserve ;
Wold honest dethe come, and me overterve,
And of my grave me putte in seisyne,
To all my greef that were a medicyne.”

“ What, sone, how now ? I see wele smalle effecte,
Or elles none, my wordes in the take ;
Outher fulle symple is thyne intellecte,
Or hokirly thou hast hem overshake,
Or thy gost slept hathe ; what, my sone ? awake !
Whilere thou seidest thou were of me gladde,
And now it seemethe thou art of me sadde.

I deeme so, syn that my longe sermoun
Profitethe not, it sore me repentethe.”
“ Fader, be nat of that oppynyoun ;
For as ye wole I do, myne hert assentethe ;
But ay amonge, thought me, fadir, turmentethe
So sharply, and so troublethe and despeirethe,
That it my witte foule hyndrethe and apeirethe.”

“ O, my goode sone ! wolt thou yit algate
Dispeirede be ? nay, sone, lete be that.
Thow shalt as blive entre into the yate
Of thy comforte ; now telle on playne and plate,
My lord the prince knowethe he the nat ?
Yf that thou stode in his benevolence,
He may be salve unto thyne indigence,

No man bette, next his fader our lorde the lige.”

“ Yis, fader, he is my goode gracious lorde.”

“ Wele, sone, than wole I me oblige,
And God of heven vouche I to recorde,
That yf thow wolt be fully of myne accorde,
Thou shalt no cause have more thus to muse,
But hevynesse voide, and it refuse.

Sithen he thy gode lorde is, I am fulle sure,
His grace shalle not to the be denyede;
Thou woste wele he benigne is and demure
To see unto, not is his gost maistriede
Withe daungere, but it is fulle appliede
To graunte, and not the nedy werne his grace;
To hym pursue, and thy releef purchase.

Compleyne unto his excellent noblesse,
As I have herde the unto me compleyne,
And but he quenche thy grete hevynesse,
My tunge takke and slitte it in peces tweyne.
What, sone myne, for Goddes dere peyne,
Endite in Latyne or in Frensshe thy greef clere,
And for to write it wele do thy powere.

Of alle thre thou oughtest be wele ylerede,
Syn thou so longe in hem laboured haste,
Thou of the pryvé seel art olde yyereded.”
“Yit, fader, of hem fulle smalle is my taste.”
“Now, sone, than thou foule hast in waste
Dispended thy tyme, and natheles, I trowe,
Thow kanst do bette than thou wolt do me knowe.

What shalle I calle the? what is thy name?”
“Occleve, fader myne, men callen me.”
“Occleve, sone?” “Ywis, fader, the same.”
“Sone, I have herde or this men speke of the;
Thow were acqueynted withe Chaucers pardé,
God save his soule! best of ony wight;
Sone, I wole holde the that I have the hight.

Althoughe thou sey thou nouthur in Latyne
Ne in Frensshe canst but smalle endite,
In Englisshe tunge thou canst wele afyne."
"Truly therof kan I but a lyte."

"Ye, strawe! lete be! take thy penne and write,
As thou kanst, and thy sorwe turne shalle
Into gladnesse, I doute it not at alle.

Syn thou maist not be paied in the eschequer,
Unto my lorde the prince make instaunce
That thy patent into the haniper
May chaunged be." "Fader, by your suffraunce,
It may nat so, bycause of the ordynaunce,
Longe after this shalle no graunte chargeable
Oute passe; fader myne, this is no fable."

"An egalle chaunge it is, my sone, in sothe,
And no charge, I wote it wele in dede.
What, sone myne, good hert take unto the;
Men seyne who so of every grasse hathe drede,
Lete hym beware to walke in ony mede.
Assay, assay, thou symple herted goste;
What grace is shapen the thou ne woste."

"Fader, also siker as I stonde here,
Whether that I be symple, or arghe, or bolde,
Suche an eschaunge gete I none to yere,
Do as I kan, withe that I have in holde.
For, as for that, my comfort is but colde;
But wele I fynde your good wille alwey
Redy to me, in what ye kan or may."

“That is sothe, sone; now syn thou me toldest
 My lorde the prynce is goode lord the to,
 No maistrye is to the, yf thou woldest
 To be releevd; wost thou what to do,
 Write to hym a goodely tale or two,
 On whiche he may disporten hym be nyght,
 And his free grace shalle upon the light.

Sharpe thy penne and write on lustily;
 Lete see, my sone, make it fresshe and gay;
 Uttre thyne art as thow canst craftily,
 His hye prudence hathe insight verray
 To jugge where it be wele made or nay;
 Wherfore, sone, it is to the nede
 Unto thy werk to take the gretter hede.

But of o thyng be wele ware in alle wise,
 On flatterye that thou not the founde;
 For therof, sone, Salamon the wise,
 As that I have in his Proverbes founde,
 Seithe thus: They that in feyned speche abounde,
 And glosyngly unto her frendes talke,
 Spreden a nette before hem where they walke.

Proverb.
 xxix°. Qui
 blandis fictis-
 que sermoni-
 bus loquitur
 amico suo,
 expandit
 rethe gressi-
 bus suis, etc.

Proverb. j°.
 Fili mi, si te
 lactaverint
 peccatores,
 ne adquiescas
 eis, etc.
 Jeremie ix°.
 In ore suo
 pacem loqui-
 tur et occulte
 ponit ei in-
 sidias.

Yf a disceyvour yeve a man to souke
 Wordes plesaunt in hony al bewrappede,
 Goode is a man to eschewe suche a pouke;
 Thurghe favelle hathe many a man myshappede.
 For when he hathe jangelede alle and clappede,
 Withe his frende trefyng openly,
 He in awaite lithe on hym covertly.

Seneca li^o vij^o
de Beneficiis.
Summa loca
tenentibus
maxime deest
qui veritatem
dicat, adula-
cionis certum
omnibus offi-
cium est una
omnium con-
tencio quis
blandissime
fallat.

Immo Seneca.
Ignorant
seculi po-
tentes vires
suas, dum se
credunt tam
magnos
quanti predi-
cantur.

The most lakke that the lordes han grete
Is of hym that her sothes shulde hem telle;
And in the glose folke labouren and swete,
They striven who best kan rynge the belle
Of fals plesaunce, in that her hertes swelle,
Yf that one kan bette than other deceyve,
And suche deceytes lordes blyndely receyve.

The worldly riche men han no knowleche
What that they be of her condicioun,
They ben so blent withe favelis gay speche,
Whiche reportethe to hem that her renoun
Is every where halwede in the toune,
That in hem self they deemen grete vertu,
Where as ther is but smalle, or not a gru.

For unnethe a goode worde men speke of hem,
This fals tresoun comoun is and rive;
Better were it thou were at Jerusalem,
Sone, than thou were therin defectyfe.
Syn my lord the prince is, God holde hym lyfe,
To the good lord, good servaunt thou the quyte
To hym and trewe, and it shalle the profite.

Write to hym no thyng that sownethe to vice,
Kithe thy love in mater of sadnesse,
Loke yf thou fynde kanst ony tretyce
Groundede on his estates holsomnesse,
Suche thyng translate and unto his hynesse
As humbly as that thou kanst presente;
Do thus my sone." "Fader, I assente.

Wight hert as tremblyng as the leef of aspe,
Fader, syn ye me rede to do so,
Of my symple conceyte wole I the claspe,
Undo and lete it at his large go ;
But weleaway ! so is myne hert wo,
That the honour of Englisshe tonge is dede,
Of whiche I was wonte have counseile and rede.

O, maister dere and fader reverent,
My maister Chaucers, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
O, universal fader in science,
Allas ! that thou thyne excellent prudence
In thy bedde mortalle myghtest not bequethe,
What eyled dethe, alas ! why wold he sle the ?

O dethe, thou didest not harme singulere
In slaughtre of hym, but alle this londe it smertethe.
But natheles yit hast thow no powere
His name to slee, his hye vertu astertethe.
Unslayne fro the whiche ay us lyfly hertethe,
Withe bookes of his ornat endityng,
That is to alle this lande enlumynyng.

Hast thou not eke maister Gower slayn,
Whos vertu I am insufficient
For to discrive, I wote wele in certayn ?
For to slee alle this worlde thou hast yment ;
But syn our Lorde Criste was obedient
To the, in feithe I kan no ferther sey,
His creatures mosten to the obey.

Fader, ye may laughe at my nyce speche,
Yf that ye list, I am no thyng formelle;
My yonge kunnyng may none hyer reche,
My witte is also slipir as ony ele.
But how ever I speke, algate I mene wele."
"Sone, thou seist wel ynoughe, as me seemethe;
None other feele I, so my conceyte deemethe.

Now, fare wele, sone, go home to thy mete,
It is hye tyme; and go wole I to myne;
And what I have seide the thou not foryete;
Suche as I am, sone, I am thyne,
Thow seest wele, age hathe putte me to declyne,
And poverte hathe made me of goode alle bare;
I may not but pray for thy welfare."

"What fader, wole ye thus sodeynly
Depart fro me? Petir! Crist forbede.
Ye shalle go dyne withe me truly."
"Sone, at o worde, I mote go fro the nede."
"Nay, fader, nay!" "Yis, sone, as God me spede."
"Now, fader, syn it may none other betide,
Almyghty God yow save, and be your gyde.

And graunte grace that day me to see,
That I somewhat may quyte your goodnesse;
But, goode fader, when and where shulle ye
And I efte meete?" "Sone, in sothefastnesse,
I every day heere at Carmes masse,
It failethe not, aboute the houre of seven."
"Wele, fader, God I betake yow of heven."

Recordyng in my mynde the lessoun
That he me yafe, I home to mete went ;
And on the morwe sette I me adoune,
And penne and ynke and parchemyne I hent,
And to perfourme his wille and his entent
I tooke corage, and, whiles it was hote,
Unto my lord the prynce thus I wrote,

Hye and noble prince excellent,
My lorde the prince, O, my lorde gracious,
I, humble servaunt and obedient
Unto your estate hye and glorious,
Of whiche I am fulle tendir and fulle jelous,
Me recomaunde unto your worthynesse,
With hert entier and spirite of mekenesse.

Right humbly axyng of you licence,
That withe my penne I may to you declare,
So as that kan my wittes innocence,
Myne inwarde wille that thurstethe the welefare
Of your persone ; and elles be I bare
Of blisse, whan that the colde stroke of dethe
My lyfe hathe quenchede and me byraft my brethe.

Thoughe that my livelode and possessioun
Be skant, I riche am of benevolence ;
To you therof kan I be no nygoun ;
Goode have I none by whiche your excellence
May plesed be, and for myne impotence
Stoppethe the way to do as I were holde,
I write as he that your goode lyfe fayne wolde.

Arestotle, most famous filosofre,
His Epistles to Alisaundre sent,
Whos sentence is wel bette that gold in cofre,
And more holsomer grounded to trewe entent;
For alle that ever tho Epistles ment,
To sette was this worthy conquerour
In reule, how to sustene his honour.

The tendir love and the fervent chiertee
That this worthy clerk ay to this kyng bere,
Trustyng his welthe durable to be,
Unto his hert stak and satte so nere,
That by writyng his counseille yave he clere
Unto his lorde, to kepe hym fro myschaunce,
As witnessethe his booke of governaunce.

Of whiche and of Gyles of Regement
Of Prynces plotmele thynke I to translate;
And thoughe that symple be my sentement,
O worthy prynce, I you beseche algate
Considerethe how that endityng hathe in hate
My dulle conceyte, and not accorde may
Withe my childhode, I am so childisshe ay.

Also beseche I that the altitude
Of your estate, thoughe this pamphlet.
None ordre holde, ne in hym enclude,
Not greved be, for I kan do no bette.
Another day whan witte and I be mette,
Whiche longe is to, and han us frendely kiste,
Discover I wole that now is not wiste.

Aristotiles et
Giles.

Natheles suche as is my smalle kunnyng,
Withe al so trewe an hert I wole it oute
As tho two did, or ever clerk livyng;
But tremblyng is my spirite out of doute,
That to perfourme that I am aboute,
Allas! the stuffe of sadde intelligence
Me failethe, to speke in so hye presence.

Symple is my gost, and scarce my lettrure,
Unto your excellence for to write
Myne inwarde love; and yit in aventure
Wole I me putte, thoughe I can but lite.
My dere maister, God his soule quyte!
And fader Chaucers fayne wolde me han taught;
But I was dulle, and lernede right naught.

Allas! my worthy maister honorable,
This londes verray tresour and richesse,
Dethe by thy dethe hathe harme irreperable
Unto us done, hir vengeable duresse
Dispoilede hathe this londe of swetnesse
Of rethoryk fro us, to Tullius
Was never man so like amonge us.

Also who was hyer in filosofye
To Aristotle in our tunge but thow?
The steppes of Virgile in poysye
Thou folwedest eke, men wote wele ynow.
That combreworlde that my maister slow,
Wolde I slayne were! dethe was to hastyfe,
To renne on the and reve the thy lyfe.

Moritur doc-
tus simul et
indoctus, etc.

Dethe hathe but smalle consideracioun
Unto the vertuous, I have espiede,
Nomore, as shewethe the probacioun,
Than to a vicious maister loselle triede;
Amonge an hepe every man is maistriede;
Withe hir as wele the poore as the riche,
Lerede and lewde, alle stonden eliche.

She myght han taryede hir vengeaunce a while,
Til that some man hade egalle to the be.
Nay, lete be that! she knewe wele that this yle
May never man bryng forthe like to the,
And hir office nedes do mote she;
God bade hir do so, I truste for the beste,
O maister, maister, God thy soule reste!

Now to my matere, as that I began;
There is a booke, Jacob de Cessoles,
Of the ordre of Prechours, made, a worthy man,
That the Chesse moralisede clepede is,
In whiche I purpose eke to laboure ywis,
And here and there, as that my litelle witte
Afforthe may, I thynke translate it.

And al be it that in that place square
Of the lystes, I mene the eschekere,
A man may lerne to be wise and ware;
I that have aventurede many a yere,
My witte therein is but litelle the nere,
Save that somewhat I knowe a kynges draught,
Of other draughtes lernede have I naught.

And for that amonge the draughtes everychone,
That unto the chesse appertene may,
Is none so nedefulle unto your persone
To knowe, as that of the cheerté verray
That I have hade unto your noblesse ay,
And shalle, yf your plesaunce it be to here,
A kynges draught reporte I shalle now here.

I am sure that the bookes alle thre
Redde hathe and seen your innat sapience;
And as I hope, her vertues folwen ye;
But unto you compile I this sentence,
That, at the goode luste of your excellence,
In short ye may beholde and rede
That in hem thre is skaterede ferre in brede.

And althoughe it be no maner of nede
Yow to counseile what to done or leve,
Yf that you liste of stories to take hede,
Somwhat it may profite, by your leve;
At hardest whan that ye ben in chambre at eve,
They ben goode to drive forthe the nyght,
They shulle not harme, yf they be herd aright.

To your hyennesse thynke it not to longe,
Thoughe in that draught I somewhat wade deepe;
The thewes vertuous that to it longe
Wacchen my gost, and letten hym to slepe.
Now God in vertu mayntene you and kepe,
And I beseche your magnificence,
Yeve unto me benigne audience.

For thoughe I to the steppes clergyalles
Of thisse clerkes thre not atteyne,
Yit for to putte in prees my conceyte smalle
Goode wille me artethe take on me the peyne ;
But sore in me quappethe every veyne,
So dredefulle am I of myne ignoraunce,
The crosse of Criste me spede and avaunce!

Now, gracious prince, agayn that the corone
Honoure you shalle withe roial dignitee,
Beseche I hym that sitte on hye in trone,
That, when that charge receyvede han ye,
Suche governaunce men may fele and see
In yow, as may be to his plesaunce,
Profite to us, and your goode loos avaunce.

First and forward the dignitee of a kyng
Impressed be in the botme of your mynde ;
Consideryng how chargeable a thyng
That office is, for so shalle ye it fynde.
Unto goode reule ye you knytte and bynde,
Of Goddes wreche have ay drede and awe,
Do right to grete and smalle, and kepe your lawe.

Ones there was a kyng, as I have redde,
Whan to hym his corone was brought,
Or he it tooke, in thought he was alle sadde,
And thus he seide, after he hade thought,
“ O thou corone, noble and faire ywrought,
Whatt man the receyveth or admytteth,
More ese than he weneth fro hym flitteth.

Who so the perelle knowethe and charge and fere
That is in the, thoughe thou at the erthe lay,
He wolde the nought up areise nor rere,
But lete the lye stille, and go his way.
For sothe is this, and hathe and shalle ben ay,
This worldes hoke sore envye hathe to his bayte,
And ay hathe highe degree sore in awaite."

Now, noble prynce, though I be not wise,
Welwillede am I, as I first you tolde,
In the name of Jhesu, wirke after thavise
That I amplye out of thise auctours olde ;
And yf I not the wey of reson holde,
Folwe me not, and yf that I do, thenne
Do as I shalle reporte with my penne.

Thoo othes that at your creacioun
Shalle thurghe your tonge passe, hem wele observe ;
Lete no colourede excusacioun
You make fro hem slippe aside or swerve ;
Holde up her hede, and lete hem not in yow sterve ;
It is not knyghtly from an othe to varie ;
A kyng of trouthe ought ben exemplarie.

Loo thus Arestotle in his booke seithe
To Alisaundre, and be ware hym bitte,
That he ne breke his boundes ne his feythe ;
For to folke untrewel longe the itte ; /
He seithe that grace in hym not abitte,
But wikked ende and cursed aventure
Hym folwethe, that to forswere hym hathe no cure.

By the feithe is made the congregacioun
Of peple and of citees enhabityng;
By feithe han kynges domynacioun;
Feithe causethe eke of men the comenyng;
Castels by feithe dreden none assailyng;
By feithe the citees stonden unwerreiede,
And kynges of her sugettes ben obeiede.

Who lesethe feithe, gretter thyng may he none leese;
Or a man speke or bynde hym by his sele,
And hathe his fulle libertee and may chese
What he wille do, hym ought avise hym wele
Or he promytte, and hete nought a dele
By worde ne bonde, but yf he wole it laste;
For who so dothe, shalle smerten atte laste.

Litelle enchesoun hathe he for to speke,
To whos wordes is yoven no credence;
Perilous it is a man his feithe to breke.
Feithe by necessitee ne indigence
Not arted is; disceyte and apparence
Of trouthe outwarde, and inwarde fikilnesse,
Bultethe out shame, and causethe grete smertnesse.

What was the cause of the distruccioun
Of the peple of Scites and of Arabee,
But for her kynges indiscepcioun
Of men and citees nye to her contree?
Her othes useden by soteltee,
Brekyng bondes that stablisskede were
Mankynde to profite, and nat to dere.

And for that synne Goddes rightwisnesse,
 That punysshethe falshode and trecherie,
 Myght not hem suffre endure in that wodenesse,
 But they distroiede were, it is no lie.
 Untrouthe, alas ! the ordre of chivalrie
 Dampnethe it, thoughe that the persone yt use,
 Knyghthode it self mote algate it refuse.

To God truste I no lorde in alle this londe
 Is gilty of that inconvenience.
 Fy ! what ? a lorde breke his heste or bonde ?
 Nay, God forbede that suche pestilence
 In a lorde dwelle or holde residence ;
 For yf that he that wikkede gest recette,
 By suche a lorde wolde honour not sette.

Nota, de fide
 Marci Reguli
 observata.

Whan Marcus Regulus was, as I rede,
 Vengwisshte in a bataile of the see
 By hem of Cartage, home withe hem thei lede
 This prisonere, and after sent was he
 By hem to Rome, his owen contree,
 Sworne to retourne to Cartage ageyn,
 As Tullius and eke seint Austyne seyn.

The cause why they to Rome hym sent
 Was to do to Romainys her message,
 Wetyng of hym yf that they wolde assent
 That, sithin there were Romainys in Cartage
 In prisoun, and Romainys hade eke in cage
 Cartagiens, suffre hem at large go,
 And the Romainys go shulde also.

When Marcus done hade as that he was bode,
The Senat axede hym what was his rede;
And he answerde and seide thus for gode,
“ Alle this, rede I, lete slippen and be dede;
It may by no wey synke into myne hede
That to us Romainys it were covenable;
Suche an eschaunge is but unprofitable.

We Romainys that they have in prisoun loke
Ben but yonge frotthe, unlernede in bataile,
And other feble folke withe age ybroke,
Of whiche I am one; we may not availe,
Of us no loste is, but withouten faile
Your prisoners ben myghty men and wise,
And folke in armes prevede at devise.”

His frendes wolde han holde hym there,
But they ne myght, he wolde alwey retourne;
To breke his othe his goste was ay in fere,
He thought not in his contré sojourne.
Do what hem liste, whether they be glad or mourne,
Unto his foes he as blive hym dressethe,
And knewe wele to be dede, the booke witnessethe.

He helde it bette his othe to observe,
And deye in honour as a knyght sholde,
Than by perjurie his lyfe to preserve,
Of such unknyghtly trikkes he not wolde.
I trowe now adayes, thoughe men be olde,
His heir fulle harde were in this londe to fynde;
Men list not so ferforthe to trouthe hem bynde.

Yit not onely to preise is this Marcus
 For trouthe, but, as it seemethe me,
 His renoune ought doublede ben, as thus :
 Where as the eschaunge myght have made hym free,
 Quyte of his fees of prisoun, gretter cheertee
 He hade of the profite universelle
 Than of hym self, his dethe it preevede wele.

De juramento
 regis Alex-
 andri obser-
 vato.

Amonge alle thynges in a knyght
 Trouthe is a thyng that he ne lakke may,
 Yf his honour shalle bere his hede upright.
 Valerye tellethe how withe grete aray,
 Kyng Alisaundre and his hoost on a day,
 Mevede of ire and of malyncolye,
 Unto a citee dressed hem on hye,

Whiche that called was and clept Lapsat,
 Purposyng hym to bete it to the erthe adoune.
 And, or that this kyng fully come therat,
 There was a filosofre in the toune,
 A man of excellent discrecioune,
 That to this kyng somtyme hade maister be,
 Fulle sore abasshede of hym and his meyné.

Oute of the toune he sped hym on his wey,
 Also hastely as he couthe or myght,
 Towarde the kyng, of grace for to prey ;
 And assone as the kyng hade of hym sight,
 He knewe hym and his menyng, and on hight
 He seide hym thus, " By the goddes, I swere,
 Alle thy labour shalle not be worthe a pere.

At thy prayere done wole I no thyng."
 This philosofre of his othe toke gode hede,
 And seide, "O, worthy conquerour and kyng,
 Then pray I the unto the towne the spede,
 And it distroye, bothe in lengthe and brede,
 Have on it no pitee, but alle doune caste,
 This pray I the, that it be done as faste."

And whan the kyng his prayer undirstode,
 Alle his angre and his errenous talent
 Refraynede he, he wolde for no goode
 On the towne venge hym, as he hade ment;
 He rather chese to be disobedient
 To his vengeable wille, and his othe kepe,
 Than be forsworne of that he swore so depe.

Or a kyng swere, it is fulle necessarie
 Avise hym wele, for whan it is paste
 He may his othe in no wise contrarie,
 Yf he of shame or reproof be agaste.
 A kyng ought of worde to be stedefaste,
 No thyng bihete but yf he it perfourme,
 Yf he wole hym unto his estate confourme.

Crisostomus super
 Mt. omelia 12.
 Nisi consuetudo
 interdicatur, non
 possunt amputari
 perjuria, ex jura-
 mento enim per-
 jurium generatur.
 Sicut enim qui
 habet in consue-
 tudinem multum
 loqui, necesse est
 ut aliquando im-

A grete clerk, whiche clept is Crisostomus,
 Where he of nature of sweryng tretethe,
 Thise arn the wordes that he writte to us,
 "Whatt man the custume of othes not letethe
 In sweryng oft, what he seithe foryetethe;
 Usage of othes of perjurie is cause."
 And more seith he eke in the same clause.

portune loquatur
sic qui habet in
consuetudine ju-
rare in rebus ido-
neis et in super-
fluis rebus, et
nolens consuetu-
dine trahente
perjurat, etc.

He seithe perjurie engendrede is of othis,
For right as he that custumably
Clappethe and jangelethe, and to stynte lothe is,
Mote other while speke unsittyngly,
Right so usage of sweryng enemy
To trouthe is, and makethe men hem forswere,
Fulle necessarie is othes to forbere.

Scriptum est,
Juramentum
tres habet
condiciones,
videlicet, veri-
tatem, judi-
cium, et jus-
ticiam; verita-
tem scilicet,
ut jurans
sciat vel
credat, etc.

Sweryng hathe thise thre condicions
Folwyng, as trouthe, doome, and rightwisnesse.
Othe axethe trouthe, and no discepcions,
But swere in his entent sothefastnesse;
Dooome mote discretely, left alle hastynesse,
Swere and not nedeles; and justice also
Leefully swere and justely evermo.

Quintilianus
dicit, quod
jurare, nisi
ubi necesse
est, gravi viro
i. nobili et
famoso viro,
parum conve-
nit; verbum
enim satis
simplex in
rege vel in
principe fir-
mius sit quam
juramentum
mercatoris,
etc.

Quyntelyan seithe that unto hye degree
Unsittyngh is to swere in ony wise,
But it be caused of necessitee;
For, as he seithe and other clerkes wise,
A kyng or prynces worde ought suffise
Welmore than ought a marchauntes othe,
And to go there agayn to be more lothe.

And sithen a prynces othe or his promesse,
Whan they not holden ben hym dishonour;
His lettre and seel, whiche more open witnesse
Beren than they, is gode take hede and cure
That they be kept; writyng wole endure;
What a man is it prest is for to preve,
Outher honoure it shalle hym or reprove.

Litera scripta
manet.

Now yf it happe, as it hathe happede ofte,
 A kyng in nede borwe of his marchauntes,
 Grete wisdom were it trete faire and softe,
 And holden hem truly her covenantes.
 For truste it wele, whan her covenant is
 Not to hem kept as that her bonde requirethe,
 The kyng hathe shame, and eke it hem myscherethe.

Lothe wole hem be eftsones for to lene;
 He that is brent, men seithe, dredethe the fire.
 Be his day kept, he rekkethe not a bene,
 But elles siker Dunne is in the myre.
 Witheout doute, a marchauntes desire
 Is withe gode hert his kyng honour and plese,
 And to his myght to refresshe and done hym ese.

In hem is the substaunce of ony lone.
 What folk chevyse so muche as done they?
 Excellent prynce, I deeme your persone
 To hem and to alle other, in goode fey,
 Wole holde that ye hoten hem alwey;
 And so to do God, the auctour of trouthe,
 You graunte, and elles were it routhe.

Yf that a poore man breke his behestes,
 Or do agein his othe, seel, or lettir,
 Men hent hym by the hede and hym areste,
 And to prison he gothe; he gette no bettir,
 Til his maynpernour his areste unfettir;
 And yit he mote the cours of lawe abide,
 Or his maynpernour mote defende his side.

Amonge the poore peple thus it gothe,
 They for untrouthe han smerte and open shame.
 And yf a lorde his worde breke, or his othe,
 For sothe it is a foule spotte in his name ;
 Thoughe men dar not openly hym defame,
 They thynke al be it that they no thyng speke,
 In such lordes is untrouthe yreke.

And sithen a kyng by wey of his office
 To God ylikned is as in manere,
 And God is trouthe it self, than may the vice
 Of untrouthe in a kyng not appere,

Jacob. iij°. Si
 quis verbo
 non offendit,
 perfectus est
 vir.

If his office shalle to God refere ;
 A besy tunge bryngethe in suche witte,
 He that by worde not gittethe is parfite.

A, Lorde, what ! it is faire and honorable,
 A kyng fro moche speche hym refreyne ;
 It sitte hym to ben of wordes mesurable,
 For moche clappe wole his estate disteyne.
 Yf he his tonge withe mesures reyne
 Governe, than his honour it conservethe ;
 And by the revers deyethe it and stervethe.

Aristotiles de regis
 continentia a
 multiloquio dicit,
 Melius est quod
 aures hominum
 sint sitibunde
 ad regis eloquia,
 quam suis affati-
 bus sacientur,
 quia saturatis
 auribus anima et
 saturatur.

Bette is the peples eres thurst and renne
 Her kyng or princes wordes for to here,
 Than that his tonge go so faste and yerne
 That mennes eres dulle of his matere ;
 For dullyng hem dullethe the hert in fere
 Of hem that yeven to hym audience ;
 In moche speche wantethe not offence.

Proverb. x. In multiloquio non deest peccatum. Ecclesi co xix. Qui odit loquacitatem, extinguit maliciam.

Proverb. xij. Qui custodit os suum, custodit animam suam; qui autem, etc.

Jacob. iij. Omnes nature bestiarum, volucrum, et serpentum domantur, etc.

Item in eodem, Lingua maculat totum corpus nostrum, etc.

Who so that hatethe moche clappe or speche,
 Quenchethe malice; and he that his mouthe kepethe,
 Kepethe his soule, as the booke techethe.
 Unbridelede wordes ofte man bywepethe.
 Prudence wakethe whan the tunge slepethe,
 And slepethe ofte whan the tunge wakethe;
 Moderate speche engendrethe rest and makethe.

Alle natures of bestes and briddes,
 And of serpentes, ben ymakede tame;
 But tunge of man, as it wele knowe and kidde is,
 Not may be tamed; O, fy! man, for shame!
 Silence of tunge is wardein of good fame;
 And after repreef fisshethe, clappethe, and foulethe,
 The tunge of man alle the body defoulethe.

And that oute of tunge of kyng procedethe
 The peple specially beren away.
 Wherefore unto a kyng the more it nedethe
 Advise hym what he speke shalle alwey.
 In mochelle speche some behest may
 Lightly asterte, that may not be holde;
 And than trouthe begynneth to colde.

O worthy prince, this loo mevethe me
 Of trouthe for a touche thus sadly,
 For that I wolde that the hye degree
 Of chivalrie universally
 Bare up his hede, and bent not awry.
 Of his honour untrouthe a knyght unlacethe,
 And his renoune alle uttirly defacethe.

And failyng it, the chief flour of his stile
 Fadethe and fallethe, and begynneth to dye.
 Honoure appropred is to chivalry.
 But now passe over, touche I wole a while
 Of rightwisnesse, whiche that out of this ile
 Purposethe fully for to fare and wende,
 So is our reule unthrifty and unthende.

Anselmus li.
 Cur deus
 homo. Jus-
 ticia est animi
 libertas, tri-
 buens unicui-
 que quod
 suum est se-
 cundum pro-
 priam digni-
 tatem, etc.

SEINT Ancelme seithe, justice is liberté
 Of wille, yevyng unto every wight
 That longethe to his propre dignité;
 To God obedience, as it is right;
 And he that poore is of degree and myght
 Unto his better honour and reverence;
 The grete eke to the smale lore and science.

Scriptum est, Sola
 benevolencia
 sufficit amanti, si
 facultas deest
 benefaciendi, etc.

To thyne egalle concorde, unto thy foo
 Suffraunce, and to thy self holynesse;
 To the nedy greved with wrecchede wo
 Mercy in dede, and rewe his distresse
 After thy powere, and releve in hevynesse,
 And rewe upon hym, yf that thy myght faile;
 For that wille shalle thy dede countervayle.

Si quis es qui jus-
 ticiam veram
 sectari desideras,
 time prius Deum.
 Scriptum est, Non
 nocere non est
 justitia, sed mali
 abstinencia, etc.

Who so it be that justice verray
 Desirethe folowe, first mote he God drede,
 And love also hertily as he kan and may.
 It not suffisethe to do no noyous dede;
 But who annoye hym wolde it forbede,
 For none anoye is no rightwisnesse,
 But it is abstinence of wickkednesse.

Scriptum est, Ipso jure fraternitatis et societatis humane consilii et auxilii debitores sumus. Hoc enim volumus ut et ipsi nobis impendant consilium, quo nostra erudiatur ignorantia, et auxilium quo juretur infirmitas nostra; unusquisque fratrem suum docere studeat que oporteat vel non oporteat facere, provocans eum ad meliora, et consulens que recta sunt coram Deo, et hoc non verbo tantum, sed opere, etc.

Of counceille and of helpe be we doctoures
Eche to other, by right of bretherhede;
For whan a man yfalle into errour is,
His brother ought hym counceille and rede
To correcte and amende his wikked dede;
And yf he be vexede withe maladie,
Mynystre hym helpe his greef to remedie.

Every man owethe to studie and muse
To teche his brother what thyng is for to do,
And what byhovethe for to refuse,
That that is goode, provokyng hym therto;
And thus he mote counseile his brother, lo,
Do that right is and goode to Goddes paye,
In word not only, but in werk alwaye.

Scriptum est, Legalis justitia est quodam modo omnis virtus; habere enim hujusmodi justiciam est implere legem. Si igitur lex jubet omne bonum, et prohibet omne malum, implere legem est perfecte virtuosum, et injusticia est integra et perfecta malicia, etc.

Lawfulle justice is as in manere
Alle vertu, and who wole have this justice,
The lawe of Crist to kepe mote he lere.
Now yf that lawe forbede every vice,
And comaunde every gode thyng and it cherice,
Fulille lawe it is vertu parfite,
And in justice is of alle vertu quite.

Aristotiles de forma et modo justicie dicit, Justicia est de natura Dei, etc.

Justice is of the kynde and nature
Of God, and he hathe made it and ordeynede
On reames and on every creature.
By justice is shedyng of blode refreynede,
And gilt punysshed whan it is compleynede;
Justice defendethe possessions,
And peple kepethe from oppressions.

A kyng is made to kepe and mayntene
Justice, for she makethe obeisaunt
The mysdoers that proude ben and kene ;
And hem that ben in vertu abundaunt
Chericethe a kyng, it is by covenant
Of othe made in his coronacioun,
And bounden to justices salvacioun.

And a kyng in fulfillyng of that is
To God, like whiche is verray rightwisnesse ;
And men of Inde seyn and holden this,
A kynges justice is as grete richesse
Unto his peple as plentee or largesse
Of erthely goode, and better than reyne
Fallyng at even fro heven, they seyne.

Fulle often sothe it is wist and seyne,
That for the wronge and the unrightwisnesse
Of kynges mynistres, that kynges bene
Holden gilty, where as in sothefastnesse
They knowen no thyng of that wikkednesse ;
Unjuste mynystres often her kyng accusen,
And they that juste ben of wronge hem excusen.

Yf the mynistres do not but justice
To poore peple, in the contree as they go,
Thoughe the kyng be unjuste, yit is his vice
Hidde to the peple, they wene ever mo
The kyng be juste, his men guyen hem so ;
But mynistres to seelde wele hem governe,
Oppressioun regnethe in every herne.

A kyng, me thynkethe, for the seurtee
 Of his gode loos, behovethe to enquire
 Of hem that han his estate in cheertee
 What fame that his poore peple hym bere ;
 He of justice is bounden hem to were,
 And to defende, and yf that they be grevede,
 By hym they mote be holpen and relevede.

Excuse shalle not his ignoraunce ;
 He mote enquire of wronge and it redresse.
 For that he the peple hath in governaunce
 He clept is kyng ; yf his men peple oppresse
 Wetyng hym, and not rekke of the duresse,
 He may by right be cleped no governour,
 But of his peple a wilfulle destroyour.

O worthy kyng benigne, Edward the laste,
 Thow hadest ofte in thyne hart a drede impressede,
 Whiche that thyne humble goste fulle sore agaste,
 And to knowe yf thow cursed were or blessedede,
 Amonge the peple ofte hast thow the dressede
 Into the contrey, in symple aray alone,
 To heere what men seide of thy persone.

Sapientie vij^o
 ad reges lo-
 quitur, Quia
 non recte ju-
 dicastis, ne-
 que custodis-
 tis legem jus-
 ticie, etc.

Althoughe a kyng have abundaunce of myght
 In his londe, at his lust knytte and unknytte,
 Goode is that he his power use aright,
 That fro the way of justice he ne flitte,
 Lest our Lorde God his grace from hym shitte,
 Of whom alle rightwis powere is deryvede ;
 For yf he do, of blis he shalle be pryvede.

I fynde how that Theodorus Surcene,
 For that he to the kyng of Lysemak
 Tolde his defautes, the kyng lete for tene
 Crucifye hym ; and as he hyng and stak
 Upone the crosse, thus to the kyng he spak,
 "This peyne, or other like therto, mote falle
 Upon thy fals counceillours alle.

Not rekke thoughe I rote on hye or lowe,
 As he that of dethe hathe no gastnesse :
 I dye an innocent, I do the knowe ;
 I dye to defende rightwisnesse.
 Thy flaterers, enhauncede in richesse,
 Dreden to suffre for right suche a peyne ;
 But I therby not sette rissches tweyne."

De generosi-
 tate et justi-
 cia ducis Ca-
 meli, et falsi-
 tate cujusdam
 magistri qui
 quosdam filios
 nobilium
 habuit ad
 erudiendum,
 etc.

There was a duk Romaine clept Camelus
 Leide ones a siege to a citee,
 Falex namede, as seithe Valerius,
 Of whiche the men of moste autorité,
 And grettest of power and of degree,
 To a maister in the citee dwellyng
 Bytooke her childrene by wey of lernyng.

What dothe me this maister but on a day
 Some of thise childrene out of the towne ledde,
 The most expert in science, and the way
 Streight to the Romaine tentes he hym spedde ;
 And the duk thus counceiled he and redde,
 "Havethe thise children in possessioun,
 And kepethe hem in holde and in prisoun ;

The faders of hem han in governaunce
Falex the citee, at her owen liste,
In hye and lowe after her ordenaunce
Is alle thyng done; whan it is to hem wiste,
That ye her children han undir your fiste,
Ye shulle wele see, her children lyfe to save,
Hem and the citee shulle ye wynne and have."

The duk answerede anone to this traitour,
"Thoughe thou be fals unto thyne owen towne,
And rekkest not of shame or dishonour,
But percaas to gete of me guerdowne
Desirest Falexes destrucciowne,
Not were it knyghtly me to consente,
That taken hast so traiterous entente.

We Romainys kepen rytes of bataile
Also truly as the rytes of pees;
Our custume is no children to assaile;
Though we the towne hade ywonne doutles
There shulde no childe amonge alle the prees
For us han greved be; we armes bere
Ageyn the armed men, hem for to dere,

And not ageyn children undefensable.
In that the is, thy myght hast thou do,
Thurghe wikked tresoun fals and deceyvable,
Thy citee to distroien and fordo;
But I, Romaine, agree me not therto,
By vertu of armes I wole it wynne,
For alle the myght of men that ben thereynne."

The duk comaundede, shortly for to seyne,
 His hondes hym behynde to be bounde,
 And bade the chyldren lede hym ageyne
 To her faders; whiche whan they hade founde
 So grete justice in this duk abounde,
 The senat hem clept and thus to hem tolde,
 The hertes bygan to chaunge of yonge and olde.

Alle they seiden of hye gentilnesse,
 Groundede upone hye justice, did he this,
 And also of chyvalrous prowesse;
 They seiden, "It to us moste sittyng is
 Our yates open and offre to ben his,
 Is none so goode as lete us mollifie
 Our hertes, and stonde to his gentrie,

And of his pees requyre hym and prey."
 They diden so, but what was folowyng,
 Not have I redde, wherfore I kan not sey;
 But this juste duk, as by my supposyng,
 Was to hem suche, in wille and in werkyng,
 That he hem quytte, so as myght hem queeme;
 What shulde I elles of suche a lorde deeme?

De nobili
 Henrico
 quondam
 Lancastrie
 duce.

Of Lancastre goode duk Herry also,
 Whos justice is writen and auctorisede,
 Why shulde I not the rekene amonge tho
 That in her tyme han justice exercisede?
 Yit that vertu onely not hathe suffisede
 To the, but alle that longethe to knyghthode
 Was ynnede in thyne excellent manhode.

De fidelitate
et iusticia
Fabricii
cujusdam
domini.

I rede also how that, hangyng a stryfe
Bitwene kyng Porrus and a lord clept Fabrice,
The leche of this kyng, a cursed caytyfe,
Involved and ywrappede in the vice
Of covetise, shope hym for to trice
His owen lorde the kyng, and hym to kille,
Yf that it hade ben Fabrices wille.

This leche unto Fabrices hous by nyght
Also pryvely as he couthe went,
And unto hym ensurede and behight,
Yf hym liste to the dede consent,
He was so glade to plesse hym and content,
His lorde the kyng withe venyme wolde he fede,
So that therthurgh he sterve shoulde he nede.

This lorde, withe that, bade men his hondes teye,
And lede unto the kyng this traiterous wight,
And alle this tresoun unto hym bewreye.
Whan this was done, the kyng seide anone right,
"See here the trouthe and manhode of a knyght;
Men may the sonne as lightly his cours reve,
As this Fabrice make his trouthe leve."

Qualiter qui-
dam judex
excoriatus
fuit, quia fal-
sum reddidit
judicium
versus quen-
dam causa
odii.

In Perce ones ther was by juggement
A man to dethe dampned in wronge wise,
For wratthe and hate and irous talent
That to this ilke man bare the justise;
And whan the knowleche of this fals jewyse
Was come unto the kynges audience,
This doome he yafe as blive and this sentence :

He bade men flee hym quyk out of the skynne,
 And therwithe cover the judicialle see,
 And make his sone to be sette thereynne,
 That juge after his fader shulde be,
 To this ende and entencioun, that he
 Shulde be ware how he doomes yaf,
 And lene alwey to rightwisnesses staf.

Nought ought a juge, for hate or love,
 Other wey deeme than trouthe requerethe;
 But at the reverence of God above
 Right ay favoure whan that it apperethe.
 Dede of justice ay conscience clerethe,
 Chacyng away thoughtes on wronge ygroundede;
 Who juggethe wrongfully ys feendly woundedede.

Gregorius.
 Qui recte judi-
 cat, et premium
 remuneracionis
 expectat, frau-
 dem in Deo per-
 petrat, quia jus-
 ticiam quam
 gratis partiri
 debuit, accep-
 tacio pecunie
 vendit.

What jugge in doome eke yevethe juste sentence,
 Awaityng upone a golden draggee,
 To God he dothe displesaunce and offence;
 For the justice, whiche of duetee
 He shulde do, cursidly sellethe he,
 For love of meede hym provokethe therto,
 And rightwisnesse no thyng so to do.

Cui si spes
 subtrahetur
 pecunie, con-
 festim a justi-
 cia recedit,
 etc.

To suche a jugge withdrawe the hope
 Of money, and he fro justice flittethe;
 Where he supposethe money to grope,
 Juste juggement he in his hert admyttethe.
 But who so that his honde fro yiftes shittethe,
 As unto us witnessethe Ysaye,
 He shalle in heven dwelle and sitte fulle hye,

Ysaye, xxxiiij.
 Qui excutit manus
 suas ab omni
 munere, iste in
 excelsis habitabit,
 etc.

Scriptum est,
Justum quidem
judicium gratis
reddere debent
Christiani, quia
non licet vendere
justum judicium,
quamvis perito
viro liceat vendere
consilium, etc

Cristen men yilde oughten juste juggement
Freely, for unleefulle is it to selle;
Thoughe it be leefulle and convenient
A wise man for rewarde his rede to telle,
A jugges purs withe golde shulde not swelle;
Yf on justice he shape his doome to bilde,
His juggementes he yiftles most yilde.

Scriptum est,
Qui rigorem jus-
ticie exercere
intendit, caveat
ne puniendo di-
lectet, vel injurias
suas ulcisci glo-
rietur; caveat
etiam ne modum
excedat aut quan-
titem delicti.

And he that dothe of justice rigour,
Lete hym beware to have no delite
In punysshying of the defendour
That hathe done the trespas, or the wite;
Never hym rejoise of his noiaunce lite,
Ne the maner excede in suche caas,
Or quantité of the gilte or the trespas.

Egidius de
Regimine, in
ij^a parte j. li.
c^o. xj^o. Sicut
anima est
corporis vita,
etc.

Even as a soule is bodyes liveliness,
And when that it is twynned from a wight
The hert is dede, so farethe rightwisnesse;
For when a reame is reulede by hir myght,
Than may the peple be fulle glad and light,
The londe may bathen in prosperitee;
And lost is alle yf that absent be she.

Qualiter
satisfactum
est legi per
quendam
consulem
Romanum.

There was a lawe ymade upone a tyme
At Roome, by the counceiles assent,
That who so were guilty of the cryme
Of advowtrye, and were therynne hent,
His eyen bothe shuld out be brent.
Now fille it so, a man, that sone was
To a counceile, was taken in this trespas.

And whan that the myshappe of this persone
Was to the peple knowen of the towne,
They loved his fader so everychone,
And hade hym in so grete affeccioun,
They seiden that none execucioun
Shulde on his sone for this dede falle,
And to the counceyle so they preiden alle.

To whiche the fader gan replye tho,
And thus alleggede he for hym, and seide,
“Considerethe, sires, I am one of tho
That to this lawe consentede and obeide,
Shulde I now the same breke,” he seide,
“For favour of my self or eny of myne?
Nay, sires, therto may I not enclyne.

Pardé that were wrong and vilonye!
The lawe shalle forthe, thoughe it felle on me.”
They gan to rumble and clappe and crye,
And the counceiles preide of the citee
The revers, and thus overcome was he,
So at the laste he sawe none other wey,
But in partie he most her lust obey.

Now kothe he, “Sithen it may be no bette,
Somwhat to yow me confourme wole I,
So that the lawe shalle not be lette,
Thoughe that it myght observede be fully;
Thus wole I and none other truly,
One of myne eyen wole I now forgo,
My sone another, it shalle be right so.

We two wole have but o mannes sight.”
 Thus was it done ; but not alle at the plesaunce
 Of the peple, but they none other myght.
 Now yf to morwe fille there suche a chaunce,
 Shulde men fynde so juste governaunce ?
 Nay, nay, this londe is alle to scars and lyte,
 To fynde one that so justely wolde hym quyte.

De legum
 observacione.

PRINCE excellent, have your lawes in chere,
 Observe hem, and offende hem by no wey ;
 By othe to kepe it bounden is the powere
 Of kyng, and by it is kynges nobley
 Sustened ; lawe is bothe lokke and key
 Of seurté ; while lawe is kept in londe,
 A prynce in his estate may syker stonde.

And douteles yf that fordone be lawe,
 A prynces power may go pley hym thenne.
 For they that nought ne have, withe knyfe ydrawe
 Wole on hem that ben myghty of goode renne,
 And hurte hem, and her houses fire and brenne,
 And robbe and slee, and alle suche folye,
 When no man wole to hem lawe justifie.

Now in goode feithe I pray God it amende,
 Lawe is nye flemede out of this contree ;
 For fewe ben that dreden it to offende.
 Correccioun, and alle this is longe on the ;
 Why suffrest thow so many assemblé
 Of armed folke, welnye in every shire ?
 Partie is made to venge her cruelle ire.

They withe her hande wrong to hem done redresse,
 Hem deynethe not an accioun atame
 At comon lawe; suche unbuxomnesse
 Suffrede, us wole make of seurtee lame.
 Who so may this correcte, is worthy blame
 That he ne dothe not; alas! this suffraunce
 Wole us distroye by contynuaunce.

Is there no lawe this to remedie?
 I kan nomore, but and this forthe growe,
 This lande shalle it repente and sore abie.
 And alle suche mayntenaunce, as men wele knowe,
 Sustenede is not by persones lowe;
 But cobbes grete this ryot sustene;
 Correcte it gode is, while that it is grene.

For and it hore, this londe is but loste;
 He that our hede is sore it shalle repent;
 And this to amende axethe no grete coste,
 But by lawe in no vengeable entent,
 Sey I, but for the better hem take and hent,
 And punysshed hem by lawfulle rightwisnesse,
 And suffre not eche other thus to oppresse.

Unde Solon
 unus de vij.
 sapientibus.
 Lex est aranea
 tela, quia si
 incideret quid
 debile reti-
 netur, grave
 autem per-
 transit tela
 cissa.

Smalle tendirnesse is hade nowe of our lawes;
 For yf so be that one of the grete wattes
 A dede do, whiche that ageyn the lawe is,
 Not at alle he punysshede for that is.
 Right as, lop-webbes flyes smale and gnattes
 Taken, and suffren grete flyes go,
 For alle this world lawe is reulede so.

The riche and myghty man, thoughe he trespace,
No man seithe ones that blak is his eye;
But to the poore is denyed alle grace,
He snybbed is, and putte to turmentrye;
He not asterte may, he shalle abyge;
He caught is in the webbe, and may not twynne;
Moche goode rule is sowe and springithe thynne.

Of this growethe stryfe, bataile, and discorde;
And by the grete poore folk ben grevede.
For he that noble is of blode and lorde
In stile, and nought hathe, stired is, and mevede
Unto rapyne, this is often prevede.
The poore it feelethe, thus of lawe the lak
Norisshethe wrong, and castethe right abak.

Whan a kyng dothe his peyne and diligence
His reame by lawe and resoun to gye,
He stonde the more in benevolence
Of God, and more his werk shalle fructifye,
And have gretter meede, it is no lye,
Then they that suche cure have none in honde;
Thus fynde I writen, as I undirstonde.

Who so that in hye dignitee is sette,
And may do grevous wrong and crueltee,
Yf he forbere hem, to comende is bette,
And gretter shalle his meede and merite be
Than they that may not kithe inequitee,
Ne nought may done; for yf some man were of myght,
Often wolde he do grete harme and unright.

Principatus
virum
ostendit.

Hye dignitee, the filosofre writethe,
Preveth a man what he is in his dede;
When that a prince in vertu hym delitethe,
Then is his peple warisskede of drede;
Then may they sey and syng and grede,
“Honour and long lyfe, joye and cristes blissyng,
Mote have our susteynour our prynce and kyng.”

When that an emperour in dayes olde
Crowned was, after as blive anone
Makers of tombes come unto hym sholde,
And aske hym of what metalle or what stone
His tounge shulde be, and forthe they gone
With suche device as the lorde luste devise,
And up they make it in her best wise.

Thus was it done to bryng in memorie
That he was but a man corruptible,
And that this worldes joye is transitorie,
And the truste on it slipir and fallible;
And this considerede ought hym be penyble
His reame wele for to governe and gye,
For who so livethe wele, wele shalle dye,

Eccⁱ vije.
Meditacio
mortis est
quasi frenum
hominem
refrenans
ne exerceat
vicia, etc.

Like a bridelle is dethes remembraunce,
That mannes hert refreynethe fro vice.
That kyng that knyghtly is of governaunce,
That is to sey, dothe justly his office,
Of love and pees and rest is norice;
And when he is out of this worlde went,
Thus sey men that gone by his monument,

“ In heven mote this kynges soule reste,
 This worthy kyng, grete was the pees
 That men hade in his tyme, he was the beste
 That myght be, he kept his peple harmeles;
 In his comyng glad was alle the pres,
 And sory were of his departyng.”
 O gracious pryncè, suche be your wirchyng.

Thus, my gode lorde, wynneth peples voice;
 For peples voice is Goddes voice, men seyne.
 And he that for us starfe upone the croice
 Shalle quyte it you, I doute it not certeyne;
 Your labour shalle not idle be in veyne.
 No goode dede unrewarded is or quytte,
 Ne evylle unpunysshede, as seithe holy writte.

Nullum
 bonum jure
 muneratum,
 nec malum
 impunitum.

In your prosperitee and in your welthe
 Remembrethe ever amonge that ye shalle dye,
 And wote not whan, it comethe in a stelthe,
 Have often him before your myndes eye;
 For whan none hert may hide ne wrye,
 His secrete thoughtes God alle wote and weyethe,
 Hym love and drede and his lawes obeyethe.

Quod elec-
 tiones sint in
 ecclesiis
 cathedralibus
 libere.

Now sithen a kyng is to his lawes swore,
 And lawe biddethe free eleccioun
 In chirches passe, my goode lorde, therfore,
 Let no favour ne none affeccioun
 So meve your wise circumspeccioun,
 To lette hem of her lawefulle libertee;
 Lete hem rejoice her propre duetee.

The chapitre of a chirche cathedrale,
When they han chosen her hede and pastour,
Whiche as hem thynkethe sufficient at alle
Hem for to reule and be her governour,
Writethe unto the pope in her favour,
Besekyng humbly his faderhede
It to conferme, and that is a juste dede.

And yf the lawe suffre you to write
For eny man apart, herkenethe now me,
Lete vertu then therto yow excite,
Loke that the man have abilitee,
That shalle receyve that hye dignitee,
That is to sey, he be clene of livyng,
Discrete, juste, and of sufficient kunnyng.

And yf the pope to that estate provyde
A persone at your prayere and instaunce,
Your sonde he takethe to the bettir side ;
He holdethe the persone of suffisaunce
To have suche a cure in governaunce,
For so witnessethe the suggestioun
That to hym made is, for his promocioun.

To kynges lettres yeven is credence ;
Be ware how that ye write in suche matere,
Leste that ye hurte and mayme conscience.
For yf that execute be your preiere
The persone unworthy, ye shalle fulle dere
Rewe it, no smalle charge is the soules cure
Of alle a diocise, I yow ensure.

Yf suche writyng be of right suffrable,
 And the man able suche charge to receyve
 For whom ye write, that is comendable ;
 And elles wole it your soule deceyve.
 Helpe hym that able is, and unable weyve ;
 Weyve favelle withe his polisskede speche,
 And helpe hym that wele kan do and teche.

But certes favelle hathe caught so sadde foote
 In lordes courtes, he may not thens slide,
 Who come or go, algate abide he mote ;
 His crafte is ay to sustene the wrong side,
 And fro vertu his lord to divide ;
 And, for sothe sawes ben to lordes lothe,
 Nought wole he sothe seyne, he hathe made his othe.

Qualiter quidam miles in
 exilium se
 posuit, quia
 leges bonas
 pereum editas
 vellet obser-
 vari.

Lete favelle passe, foule mote hym falle !
 Forthe in justice wole I now procede.
 There was a knyght, I note what men hym calle,
 A juste man and a trewe in alle his dede,
 Whiche on a tyme, as thought hym was nede
 The frowarde peple by sharp lawes bynde,
 Lawes fulle juste he made, and in sharp kynde.

And whan they were before hem radde,
 They made hem wonder wrothe, and seiden alle,
 They were not so nyce ne so madde
 To hem to assente, for ought that may befalle ;
 They wolden hem not to the lawes thralle,
 And wolden han arted this knyght repele,
 Makyng ageyn hym an haynous quarele.

Whan he sawe this, he blive to hem seide,
“ I made hem not, it was god Appollo ;
And on my bak the charge he leide
To kepe hem ; sires, what sey ye therto ?
As he me chargede, so have I do.”
And therto anone answerede the prees,
“ We wole hem not admytte doutles.”

“ Wele,” kothe he then, “ is goode or ye hem breke,
That unto god Appollo I me dresse,
To trete of this matere and withe hym speke ;
Witheouten hym, I may it not redresse.
Beseche hym I wole, of his gentilnesse,
To repele hem, syne that they to streyte be,
And do my dever, right wele ye shalle see.

But, or I go, ye shal unto me swere
The lawes to kepe til I ageyne come,
And breke hem not.” To whiche they gan answeren,
“ Ye, ye, man, we graunt it alle and some.”
They made her othe, and he his wey hathe nome.
He not to Appollo but to Grece went,
And there abode til that the dethe hym hent.

And whan that his last day gan to appeere,
He bade hem throwe his body in the see,
Lest upone the londe made were his beere,
The peple myght unto her citee
His bones carye, and at her large be
Quyte of her othe, as to her juggement ;
Thus he devysede in his testament.

Sithen I spoke have of justice, as ye knowe,
 Unto pitee, whiche mote ben hade algates,
 And namely in princes ought it growe,
 I wole me dresse; she openethe the yates
 Of helthe to hym that in sikenesse estate is;
 She esethe many a wight that is distressedede,
 That nere hir helpe shulde be sore oppressedede.

Scriptum est,
 Pietas est ex
 benigne men-
 tis dulcedine
 grata omnibus
 auxiliatrix.

PITEE nought elles is, I undirstonde,
 But gode wille inwarde of debonaire hert,
 And outwarde speche, and werk of man to fonde
 To helpe hym that men seen in myschief smert.
 Men selde hym seen into wikked dethe stert,
 That pitevous is, but they han cruelle dethe
 Often whos crueltee cruelly slethe.

Whilom ther was a tyraunt dispitous,
 That so delited hym in crueltee,
 That of no thyng was he so desirous.
 Now shope it so a man that to pitee
 Foo was, and frende to iniquitee,
 A sotelle werkman in craft of metalle,
 Wrought in this wise, as I you telle shalle.

Nota, de cru-
 delitate cu-
 jusdam artifi-
 cis subtilis, et
 qualiter per
 artem suam
 propriam
 puniebatur;
 et hoc refert
 Horosius.

His lorde the kyng he thought to plese and glade,
 And craftely he made a bole of bras;
 And in the side of it he slily made
 A litelle wicket, that ordeynede was
 To receyve hem that stoden in dethes cas;
 Undir the whiche men shulde sharp fire make,
 Tho folke to dethe for to brenne and bake.

And yit moreover, the kyng for to meve
 The lessee unto pitee, it was made so
 By sotelle craft the dampned folke to greve,
 That whan to crye compelled hem her wo,
 Her voice was like a boles evermo,
 And no thyng like a mannes voice in soune,
 As in the scripture made is mencioune.

But our Lorde God, of pitee the auctour,
 Displesed withe the cruelle ordinaunce,
 Suche rewarde shope unto this losengeour,
 That it abatede alle his countenaunce :
 And for to preve his feendly purvyaunce,
 How sharpe it was and couthe folke distreyne,
 The first he was that entrede in that peyne.

For whan the kyng his cruelle werk hade seyne,
 The craft of it comended he fulle wele,
 But the entent he fully helde ageyne,
 And seide, "thou that art more cruelle
 Than I, the maidenhede of this jewelle
 Shalt preeve anone, this is my juggement."
 And so as blive he was therynne brent.

De adula-
 cione.

Men may see here how favelle hym enclynethe
 Ay to his lordes luste, what so it be ;
 Unto that ende he besiethe hym and pynethe,
 And no consideracioun hathe be,
 Thoughe it be harme to his lordes degree,
 Or ageyn feithe, honour, or conscience,
 In fals plesaunce is alle his diligence.

To what thyng it be, yf that his lorde like,
 He hym confermethe, he never denyethe
 His lordes resons, but, a thanke to pike,
 His lordes wille and witte he justifieth,
 While favelle lyveth, no fals counseile dyeth ;
 Favelle is wedded to plesaunt disceyte,
 And in that wedlok trewe is his conceyte.

Grounde of tresoun, o thou cruelle favelle,
 How longe shalt thou be a potestate ?
 In lordes courtes thou pleyest thy parcelle,
 So that it strecchethe to thy lordes mate ;
 For thou hast never thy lordes estate
 To hert chere, but alle thy besynesse
 Is for thy lucre and thy cofres warmenesse.

Seneca dicit de
 quibusdam qui
 Neronem seque-
 bantur, Mel
 musce sequun-
 tur, cadavera
 lupi, predam
 sequitur ista
 turba, non ho-
 minem.

Favelle was never freendly man unto ;
 Lordes, bethe ware, it nedethe truly.
 Senek by hem that folowed Nero
 Seithe thus, a flye folowethe the hony,
 The wolf careyn, he seithe ; so wele wote I
 That companye foloweden her pray,
 And not the man, and so do men this day.

Nota.

While that the swetnesse of richesse endurethe,
 Unto the riche is many a man plesaunt ;
 Onely the richesse therto hem lurethe,
 What he comaundethe, they ben obedient
 To do, while that he of goode is abundaunt.
 But whan the pray, the rychesse, is go,
 The man forsaken they for evermo.

O favelle, a blynde marchaunt art thou one,
 That for worldly goode and grace and favour,
 Whiche passe shalle and faile and overcome,
 Suche diligence thou doost, and suche labour,
 That thou thy soule from our Savyour
 Twynnest, and sleest thy lordes soule also,
 And causest hem to peyne eternalle go.

There is a longe and a large difference
 Bitwene vertuous plesaunce and flaterye.
 Goode plesaunce is of suche benevolence,
 That what goode dede he may in man espye,
 He preisethe it, and rebukethe folye;
 But favelle takethe alle another parte,
 In wrong preisyng is all his craft and arte.

Hugo de Sancto
 Victore. Adu-
 lator est ille qui
 tacet et dat con-
 sensum, ne of-
 fendat quem
 optat habere
 propicium, etc.

Qui tacet, etc.

A gloser also kepethe his silence
 Often, where he his lorde seethe hym mystake,
 Leste that his answeere myght done offence
 Unto his lorde, and hym displesed make.
 He holt his pees, and not a worde dar he crake;
 And for he nought ne seithe, he his assent
 Yevethe therto, by mannes juggement.

Who so that wote the purpose of a wight,
 That is ygroundede upone wikkednesse,
 And not ne lettethe it unto his myght,
 Favourethe it, as the booke kan expresse;
 Who so it lookethe, fynde it shalle no lesse.
 But of alle this now make I here an ende,
 And to my tale of pitee wole I wende.

A prince mote ben of condicioun
 Pitevous, and his angre refreyne and ire,
 Leste unavised commocioun
 Hym chaufe, and sette his hert so afire,
 That hym to venge as blive he desire,
 And fulfille it in dede, hym owethe knowe
 His errour, and quenche that fry lowe.

Arestotle amonestethe wonder fast,
 In his booke whiche that he to Alisaundre wrote,
 Yf he wolde have his reigne endure and last,
 That for none ire he never be so hote
 Blode of man to shede; and God seithe wele, I wote,
 That unto hym receyvede is vengeance,
 Who so that sleethe shalle have the same chaunce.

Michi vindic-
 tam, etc.
 Item, Qui
 gladio percu-
 tit, etc.

But this ment is not by the cours of lawe,
 That put a man to dethe for cryme horrible.
 When he a man ymurdrede hathe and slawe,
 A man to slee by lawe it is lisible,
 That slaughter afore God is admyttible;
 And yf a kyng do suche murdrers grace
 Of lyfe, he boldethe hym efte to trespase.

Facilitas ve-
 nie incentum
 præbet delin-
 quencium.

A kyng of this londe, whilom herde I seyne,
 For mannes dethe a pardone hade be grauntede
 Unto a man, whiche afterwarde ageyne
 The same gilte hade in another hauntede.
 After whos dethe, he homely hym avauntede
 He nas nat so frendeles, he wolde do
 Wele ynoughe, thoughe he hede slayne other two.

“Of frendes,” koth he, “have I large wone,
That for that they han hade and shulle of myne,
Before the kyng for me shalle knele echone;
They atte fulle kun his hert myne.
Thider wole I go streight as ony lyne;
And they that now anoyen me or greve,
I shalle hem quyte hereafter, and I leve.”

He came unto the kyng, and axed grace
Of that he wrought hade so synfully.
The kyng avised hym wele of his fate,
And seide, “Frende, me thynkethe how that I
Have unto the done grace or this sothely;
I grauntede ones a chartre to the
Of mannes dethe, as I remembre me.

Hast thou now slayn another man also?”
Now stoode a foole sage the kyng beside,
And or the kyng spak ony wordes mo,
He to hym seide, “For God that dide,
Why deeme ye this man an homycide?
He slowe hym not, for ye your self hym slow,
And, by your leve, I shalle tellen how.

Yf that the lawe myght his cours han hadde,
This man here hade ben for the first man dede;
Foryeve hym now; and yf he be dradde
To slee the third, than gurd of myne hede.
Now be avisede wele, it is my rede,
How ye your pardoun graunt, lest errour
Of nyce pitee be your accusour.”

This kyng wel thought that he seide hym trouthe,
And chartirles gothe this man fulle of drede,
And afterwarde of whos desert was routhe
The lawe hym yafe that longede to his mede.
My tale is done, now sothely it is nede
Tho grauntes to withstonde, that procure
Mischevous dethe to many a creature.

Pitee availethe moche, but not there;
For better is to slee the murderman,
Than suffre hym reigne, for he hathe no fere
His hande to use forthe as he began.
And in my conceyte feele wele I kan,
That of suche pitee is the abstinence
Of gretter pitee for the consequence.

Yf rightfulle dethe of o man kepe and save
Two innocentes lives, thynkethe me
By resoun more merite ought hym have
That comaundethe this gilty man dede to be,
Than he that lyfe hym grauntethe; why, lete see?
The gilty man is no wronge done unto,
But wronge is done unto thise other two.

Every man wote wele for to save tweyne
Is gretter grace than to save but one.
Of murdre is cause grete to compleyne,
Tho pardons alle to lightly passe and gone.
Avise hem that favour hem, by seint Johane,
Who so it be that therto the kyng mevethe,
Wel more than he wote his soule he grevethe.

Awise the kyng eke for ony request
 Unto hym made, by grete estate or mene,
 That he favoure it not ; it is the best
 The request to werne and voide clene,
 Of suche in sothe as murders ben, I mene.
 But and one be by malice of his foes
 Enditede, pardoun be to hym not cloos.

Yf that be sothe, lete pitee walke large ;
 For she and mercy therto wille assente.
 It is a perelle of either charge,
 Routh were it the giltles to turmente.
 Pitee shalle soule of man to God presente ;
 And God, that yave us ensauple of pitee,
 To pitous folk salvacioun shalle be.

De pietate
 Marci Mar-
 celli.

The pitous hert of Marcus Marcellus
 Wel worthy is to be drawn in memorie ;
 He may ensauple and myrroure be to us.
 For, as Valerye writethe in a storie,
 Whan this Mark opteynede the victorie
 By siege leide to men of Siracuse,
 As I shalle seyne, he hevily gan muse.

He went hym on hye upone a tree,
 Where he beholde myght alle the citee,
 And how fortune hade shape hym, that he did see.
 Withe hert tendre than considerede be,
 And hade of folkes dethes suche pitee,
 That fro wepyng myght he hym not restreyne,
 Alle his tryumphe was to hym but peyne.

Who so hade stonde by hym in that tide,
 And hym avisede on his countenaunce,
 Wolde han supposede that that other side
 Rather hade putte hym to the outraunce,
 Than he hade had of hem so faire a chaunce.
 O worthy knyght, who shalle thy steppes sue,
 Thy successour holt hym to longe in mue.

O citee, sithen fortune was contrarie
 To the in o part, yit hir gentillesse
 Purveiede the a benygne adversarie.
 Thanke hir for that, for thy desire is lesse,
 Falle in the daunger of lambes humblesse,
 Than be withe cruelle wolves alle tofrete;
 A lambe is not so gredy on hir mete.

There nys no thyng, as witnessethe the storie,
 Makethe a knyght so shynyng in renoune,
 Whan that he of his foes hathe the victorie,
 As rewe on hym that throwen is adoune,
 And if he blode eschewe effusioune.
 A bestes kynde is, that is wilde and wode,
 Victorie not desirethe but the blode.

Scriptum est,
 Ferarum
 genus est non
 victoriam sed
 sanguinem
 sitire.

Nota, de be-
 nignitate et
 pietate Pom-
 pei.

Also whan that the kyng of Ermenye
 Venquysshede was in bataile by Pompeye,
 This kyng fille doune unto his foote on hye,
 And from hym cast his diademe away;
 But Pompeyus, as blive of his nobley
 Stert unto hym and up hym lifte and hent,
 And many a worde benygne on hym spent.

He did his myght hym to comforte and queeme,
And right anone, witheout ony delay,
Upone his hede bade sette his diademe
Ageyn, and so was it do, it was no nay.

De pietate
Juli.

Whan Cesar emperour upon a day
Pompey sawe before hym ledde and bounde,
Cesar in teres salt gan abounde.

De pietate
regis Alex-
andri.

Whan Alisaundre eke, as Valerye hathe tolde,
Was on a tyme in the feelde withe his oste,
And an aged knyght of his, for verray colde,
His lively myght lorne hade allemoste,
So grevous tempest tho fille in that cooste,
And whan this worthy kyng this hade espiede,
Out of his see he roos and to hym hyede.

And by the honde this olde knyght he tooke,
Comfortyng hym in his best manere,
And ledde hym unto his tent, as seithe the booke,
And in his ryalle siege and his chaire
As blyve hym sette; thus may kynges lere
Distrecede knyghtes to helpe and releve,
To take ensample of this it shalle not greve.

What wonder was it, thoughe that knyghtes tho
Desireden so noble prynces to serve,
Sithen that lever hym was for to forgo
His dignitee, and her helthe to conserve,
Than his estate kepe, and hym suffre sterve?
Yit hope I to see his heir in this provynce,
And that shalle ye be, my goode lorde the prynce.

* Adhuc de
pietate Julii.

Before a jugge eke in poynte to be dede
Of Julius Cesar there was a knyght,
That withe an hye voice, for to save his hede,
To his lorde Cesar cryede alowde right,
Besechyng hym that, of his gracious myght,
He wold hym helpe and rewe on his estate;
And Cesar sent hym a goode advocate.

And to that than this knyght as blive thus
On height wele, that alle the peple herde,
Withe manly cheere spake to Julius,
His lorde, and in this wise hym answerde,
“Han ye forgote how sharp it withe you ferde,
Whan ye were in the werres of Asye?
Pardee your lyfe stode in jupardye.

And advocate ne sent I none to yow,
But my self putte in prees, and for you faught;
My woundes bere goode witnesse ynow
That I sothe sey, and, lest ye leeve it naught,
I shall you shewe what harme I have caught,
The doute out of your hert for to drive.”
He naked hym, and shewed hym as blive.

Of whiche Cesar fulle sore was ashamede,
And in his hert sorwe made and mone,
He heelde hym self worthy to be blamede.
“My frend,” he seide, “lete me now alone,
And advocate wole I be in my persone
For the, I am wele holden to do so.”
And thus this knyght his dethe he saved fro.

He dredde hym, yf he nadde thus ywrought,
 The peple wolde hym have for a proude man deemede,
 And ungentille, and that he couthe nought,
 As that shulde eke unto hym have seemede,
 Thanke hym that worthy were to be queemede.
 "What prince," kothe he, "peynethe hym not wyne
 His knyghtes love, his love is to hym thynne."

Out of pitee growethe mercy and springethe,
 For piteeles man kan do no mercy.
 What prynce hem lakkethe, not aright he kyngethe,
 And, for that they ben neighbores so ny,
 To pitee joyne mercy now wole I.
 Excellent prynce, have in hym goode savour,
 And elles alle in veyne is your labour.

Augustinus
 dicit, Quod
 misericordia
 est aliene mi-
 serie vera
 compassio, et
 hec virtus
 consistit in
 duobus, scili-
 cet, dando et
 remittendo.

MERCY, after the worde of seint Austyn,
 Of hert is a verray compassioun
 Of other mennes harme, and that comethe yn
 By yifte of God, and by remissioun;
 As yf injurie or oppressioun
 Be done to us, that gilt foryeve us ought,
 For love of Criste that by dethe us bought.

Mt. vijo Qui enim
 dimittit injuriam,
 et si peccaverit,
 ipse dimittetur ei.
 Unde Dominus in
 evangelio, Date et
 dabitur vobis,
 dimittite, etc.
 Sed qui dimittit
 et non dat, et si
 plene non opera-
 tus est eam, meli-
 orem tamen
 partem tenet
 misericordie,

Who so wronge to hym wole foryeve,
 The better part of mercy yet holt he.
 Thus fynde I writen in auctoritee;
 But fully may there no man doe mercie,
 But yf he releve the nedy,
 His synne shalle to hym be foryeve,
 Thoughe that he no thyng of his goodes yeve.

Ambrosius. Quis-
quis fidelis sit, so-
brius, castus, et
aliis virtutibus or-
natus, si tamen
misericors non
est, misericordiam
non meretur.
Dicit enim apos-
tolus Jacobus ijo,
Judicium sine
misericordia illi
qui non facit
misericordiam.

Thoughe that a man be sobre, chaaste, and trewe,
And be withe many an hye vertu endowedede,
And yeve, and not foryeve, it shalle hym rewe ;
Where as our werkes most ben avowedede,
The unmerciablen shalle be disallowede.
Who nought foryevethe, mercy dothe he none,
And mercyles man mercy shalle forgone.

Mercy Crist caused to ben incarnate,
And humbled hym to take our bretherhede.
God immortalle, rewyng our sike estate,
Mortalle became, to punyssh our synfulle dede.
Hym lothed not his precious body to sprede
Upon the croice, the Lord benygne and goode,
He wrote our chartre withe his owen bloode.

Of hym his handwerk and his creature
For to be merciablen a right may lerne ;
This lyfe present shalle but a while dure,
And lastyng it your mercy nought ne werne.
O worthy prynce, for to God eterne
It fulle plesaunt is, dothe your mercy here,
For to late is after ye gone to the beere.

De misericor-
dia Johannis
ducis Lancas-
trie, et regis
H. iijⁱ, filii
ejus.

Take hede, gracious prince, of your grauntsire,
How in his werkes was he merciablen ;
He that for mercy dide quite his hire,
He never was in alle his lyfe vengeable,
But ever foryafe the gilty and coupable.
Our liege lorde, your fader, dothe the same ;
Now folowe hem two, my lorde, in Goddes name.

They ofte hade grete cause hem to venge,
 But her spirites benygne and pesible
 Thought that craft unlusty and alenge,
 And forbare it, they knewe it unlesible.
 To mercy were her hertes ay flexible;
 For why withe mercy God shalle quyte hem welle,
 After the wordes writen in the gospelle.

Beati miseri-
 cordes, etc.

It is to leeve and deeme, yf a.kyng shyne
 In vertu, that his sone shalle sue
 And to his faders maners enclyne,
 And wikked tacches and vices eschue.
 Thus ought it be, this to nature is due;
 He mote considre of whom he toke his kynde,
 And folowe his vertu, as men writen fynde.

Bernardus. Ille
 maxime Deum
 imitatur, qui
 nichil iudicaverit
 preciosius quam
 misereri.

Mt. xjo. Clamat
 Deus, misericor-
 diam volo, qui
 quod vult Deus
 Deo negat, a Deo
 sibi quod desiderat
 vult negari, etc.

He moste is like to God, as seithe Bernarde,
 That holdethe no thyng more precious
 Than to be mercyfulle; it is fulle harde
 To lak mercy, and to ben unpitous.
 Mercy wole I, seithe our Lord glorious;
 He that denyethe God that he wolde have,
 God nay hym shalle that he wole axe or crave.

Seneca dicit quod
 rex apum omnino
 sine aculeo est,
 voluit enim natura
 nec seivum esse
 nec ulciorum
 expetere.

Senek seithe how the kyng and the leder
 Of bees prikles hathe he right none,
 Wherwithe to styngge or anoye or dere;
 But other bees prikles han everychone.
 Nature wolde she shulde hir forgone,
 And do no crueltee unto the swarme,
 But mekely hym governe, and do none harme.

Of this ensample shulde kynges take,
 And prynces that han peple for to gye;
 For to hem longethe it, for Goddes sake,
 To wayve crueltee and tyrannye,
 And to pitee her hertes bowe and wrye,
 And reule her peple esily and faire:
 It is knyghtly to be meke and debonaire.

De misericor-
 dia regis Piri.

I rede of a kyng that Pirus was namede,
 Whan hym was tolde how men of Tarent
 Hade at a feste his estate defamede,
 He for the same folk blive sent,
 And whan they came axede to what entent
 They of hym spake so, and so foule ferde;
 And one of hem, as ye shalle here, answerde,

“ My lorde, yf that the wyne not failede hadde,
 Alle that we spake nere but game and play,
 Havyng rewarde to the wordes badde
 That we thought have spoke, in gode fay.”
 The kyng tooke up a laughtir, and went his way,
 And of alle that he helde hem excused;
 He seide it was wyne that so hem accusede.

Vengeaunce in this lorde hade no stede,
 But mercy and humble disposicioune
 Dispendede he with tho men, and grace hem did,
 And thriste undir fote crueltee adoune.
 O myghty prynce, this condicioune
 To your hyennesse is fulle accordaunt,
 And to God almyghty right plesaunt.

Power without mercy a kyng turnethe
 Into a tyrant, ware that feendly spek;
 For in what man that crueltee sojournethe,
 Unto his soule it is an odious spek.
 The men of God have neither looke ne bek,
 But yf it be bekkes of manace,
 Where as his mercy folowethe moche grace.

Proverb. xx.
 Misericordia
 et veritas re-
 gem custodi-
 unt, et robo-
 ratur ele-
 mencia thro-
 nus, etc.

Salamon in his proverbes expresse the,
 Mercy and trouthe wardeins ben of kynges,
 And withe justice also, as he witnessethe,
 His trone is strengthed; what man a kyng is,
 But yf he, amonge other thynges,
 Endowed be of alle thise thre,
 Men say he haltethe in his hye degree.

De misericor-
 dia ducis Pi-
 sistari.

A noble and glorious signe of mercy is
 A knyght to spare, whan that he slee may.
 There was a duke ycalled Pisistarus,
 That a yonge doughter hade, a faire may,
 Whiche withe her moder walked on a day,
 Not seithe the booke whider, ne what to done,
 But thus it shope, as I shalle telle sone.

A yonge fresshe lusty wele byseyne man
 So brent in love, he wende for to dey,
 Ravisshe of the beautee of this womman,
 This tendre yonge morselle, this doughter, I sey,
 And as this yonge man mette hir in the wey
 He at a lope was at hir, and hir kist;
 The moder angry woode whan she it wist.

Nota bene.

She right anone hir lorde the duke besought
 To putte hym to the dethe for his trespase.
 He seide nay, to do that never he thought,
 "Shulde we slee hem that loven us, alas!
 What shulde we than in the contrarie cas,
 That is to seyne, done to our ennemyes?"
 Thus seide this duke merciable and wise.

Allas! why was this womman so vengeable?
 Certes in that she lakkede wommanhede.
 This lover hade ben dede, it is no fable,
 Yf this duke hade be like to hir in dede;
 But mercy hym forbade ony blode shede,
 She and pitee weren of one accorde,
 And sent pacience to this lorde.

And for as muche as that pacience
 To mercy as in lyne of bloode atteynethe,
 Now wole I do my peyne and diligence
 To telle how hir benygnitee restreynethe
 The fervent hete that the hert peynethe,
 Wreche crueltee to take, and eke vengeaunce,
 Of that the hert of man feelethe grevaunce.

Gregorius dicit,
 Paciencia vera est
 aliena mala
 equanimiter pati,
 et contra eum qui
 mala irrogat
 nullo dolore
 moveri, etc.

Gregory seithe, pacience verray
 Is of harme done to man softe suffraunce,
 And not be wrothe by no maner of way
 Withe hym that hathe done a man noisaunce.

Socrates dicit,
 Nemo bene sapiens
 est qui pacienciam
 non habet, viri
 enim boni est
 scire pati, etc.

Socrates seithe, no mannes governaunce
 Iwis is nought, but it be by suffraunce prevede;
 A gode man suffrethe wronge and is not grevede.

The kynde of pacience is to sustene
 Mightily wronges, and hem never wreke;
 But foryeve hem, and wratthe and yrous tene
 Out of the hert for to spere and steke.
 Hir kynde is not to lete a worde out breke
 That harmefulle is, for hert voide of ire
 Hethe not wherwithe to sette a tunge afire.

De paciencia
 regis David.

O pacient, o humble kyng benygne,
 O kyng David, thy pacient mekenesse
 Not meved was ageyn Semy maligne,
 Whos hye malice and crabbede wikkednesse
 Yafe grete enchesoun to thy worthynesse
 To venge the, but thy benygnitee
 Forbade thyne hande to kithe crueltee.

Regum ijo, co xvjo
 Venit ergo David
 usque Bahurim, et
 ecce egrediebatur,
 etc. dixit ergo
 Abusay filius
 Sarnie, Quare
 maledicit canis
 iste? Vadam
 et amputabo
 caput ejus. Et ait
 rex, Dimitte eum
 ut maledicat
 juxta preceptum
 Domini, si forte
 respiciat Dominus
 afflictionem
 meam, et reddet
 michi bonum pro
 malediccione hac
 hodierna, etc.

As thys kyng ones came to Bahurym,
 Out came this man malicious Semy,
 Sone of Gera, and suche dispite did hym
 And to his men, as by hym wenten they
 Castyng stones unto hym alwey,
 That wonder was; for which one Abusay
 Wolde hym have slayne, but the kyng seide nay.

“Lete hym curse, after the comaundement
 Of God; whan he seethe myne affliccioun,
 And my disese, and my grevous turment,
 He wole for this dayes malisoun
 Peraventure do me some guerdoun.”
 Thus undirstonde I ywriten is in the bible,
 Whiche is a booke autentyke and credible.

De paciencia
regis Alex-
andri.

The pacience of Job men may not hide,
The comon voice wole algate it bewrey;
And Alisaundre, whos fame is spredde fulle wide,
Fulle pacient was, as the bookes sey.
A sadde wise knyght of his, withe lokkes grey,
Grucchyng ageyne his flesshely lustes, seide
Unto his flesshe, and thus he hym upbreide,

“O Alisaundre, it is uncovenable
The for to have the peples regyment,
Sithen that thy lust bestialle and miserable
Hathe queynt thy resoun and intendement,
So ferforthe that the hete violent
Of lecherie is in the, lorde and sire;
Repreef, I drede, quyte shalle thyne hire.

Fy! shameles unworthy governour.”
And whan the knyghtes tale was alle endede,
The kyng answerede, “I knowe myne errour;”
And patiently seide, “I have offendede,
I wote it wele, and it shalle ben amendede.”
A man also to Julius Cesar ones
Crabbedly seide, and sharply for the nones,

De paciencia
Julii Cesaris.

And amonge other wordes that he speke,
“Julius,” kothe he, “make it not so toughe,
For of thy birthe art thou not worthe a leeke,
Whens that thou come, men knowen wel ynoughe.
Wenest thou not that I kan telle houghe
Thy fader was a baker? o lete be,
Make it not so queynte, I pray the.”

Smylyng spake to hym this emperour,
 "Whether supposest thou bette that noblesse
 Begynne in me, or noblesse and honour
 Defaile in the?" This questioun, I gesse,
 Was in suche cas but answer of softnesse;
 For that was seide in reproof of his name
 His patience, as who seithe, toke it in game.

De paciencia
 Scipionis
 Affricani.

To the chyvalerous worthy Scipio
 Of Affrike spake ones a wight,
 And seide in armes durst he but smalle do,
 He faught but smalle whan he came to fight.
 And patiently answerde he anone right,
 "My moder me bare a childe feble and smalle,
 And forthe me brought, and no fighter at alle."

De benignitate
 et paciencia
 regis Anti-
 gonee.

Senek seithe how that kyng Antigone
 Herd ones folk speke of hym wikkedly;
 For there nas but a curtyne, as seithe he,
 Twixte hym and hym; and when he his tyme sy,
 Aside he drewe the curtyne sodeinly,
 And seide, "Goth the hens, lest the kyng yow here,
 For the curtyne hathe herde alle your matere."

De paciencia
 mirabili ducis
 Pisistaris.

Of duke Pisistaris eke wole I telle,
 He had a frende, Arispus was his name,
 Whiche ones hastely withe wordes felle
 Rebuked so this duke, that it was shame
 To here it, and yit withe sorwe and grame
 He in despite spette in this dukes face;
 And he therto no worde spake in that place.

He hade hym so in porte, worde, and chere,
 Right as hym hade be done no vilanye,
 But lokede forthe in a frendely manere.
 Now there were in this dukes companye
 His sones two, that buskede hem on hye
 To this Arispus, and wolden fulle fayne
 That her fader wolde hem have lete hym slayne.

The next day after this Arispus
 To take gan consideracioun,
 How that he to the duke mysbare hym thus,
 And made more waymentacioun
 Than I kan make of now mensioun;
 He wolde have slayne hym self, it is no lees,
 But that this duk brought it alle to rest and pees.

Whan he knewe how it with Arispus stode,
 He dressed hym to hym, and that as swithe,
 And bade hym to be glad of chere and mode;
 He seide and swore to hym often sithe,
 "A frendely wole I be and stande as ny the
 As I did ever;" and thus his pacience
 And mekenesse hathe quenchede alle this offence.

Salomon. Ubi est
 humilitas, ibi et
 sapiencia.

Origines. Si
 humilis non fueris,
 in te non potest
 habitare gratia
 spiritus sancti,
 etc.

Salamon seithe, in hym is pacience
 That is endowed with benigne humblesse;
 Grace of the holy gost no residence
 Holdethe in that man that lakkethe mekenesse.
 God toke upone hym humble buxomnesse,
 Whan he hym wrappede in our mortalle rynde,
 That ought a myrrour be to alle mankynde.

Beata Maria
ex virginitate
placuit Deo, sed
ex humilitate
concepit Deum
et hominem, ut
dicit Bernardus.

Plesaunt to God was that virginitee
Of his moder, but verray God and man
Conceyved was thurghe the humylitee
Whiche he beheld in that blissed womman.
O humble maide, who is it that kan
The debonaire humblesse tellen alle,
Restyng in thy clenness virginalle.

Basilus. Humi-
lis licet habitu
vilis sit, glorio-
sus tamen virtu-
tibus; superbus
autem si de-
corus videatur
aspectu, tamen
operibus vilis
est.

Thoughe the humble were a foule habite,
Yit in vertue glorious is he;
But the proude stant in another plite,
Thoughe his aray be faire and fresshe to see,
His dedes and his werkes foule be.
What hye estate that a man represent,
Humble to be lete hym sette his entent.

Isodorus.
Quamvis sum-
mus es, humili-
tatem tene, etc.
Salamon.
Quanto major
es humilia te in
omnibus, etc.
Cesarius.
Nunquam sine
caritate vera
humilitas aut
fuerat autp ote-
rat esse.

Humilitee verray, as seithe Cesarie,
May never be withouten charitee;
And she is of vertues most necessarie
Amonges alle vertues that be.
She over hem alle obtenethe dignitee;
They from the reigne of God hem self divide,
That charitee wayven and casten aside.

Ysodorus. Nul-
lum premium
caritati equatur,
caritas enim
virtutum om-
nium optineat
principatum, et
a regno Dei se
separant qui
semet ipsos a
caritate dissoci-
ant.

Right as a man ne may not thider go
Where he purposethe hym, but yf a way
Be thidirwarde, seint Ancelme seithe right so,
Withouten charitee, men go ne may
Aright unto God-warde, men mowen ay
Done as hem list, yf they be charitable;
But lakkyng it, is no thyng profitable.

Anselmus. Sicut
sine via nullus
pervenit quo ten-
dit, ita sine cari-
tate non recte
ambulare possumus
in via Dei.
Aug. Habe carita-
tem, et fac quod
vis.

Gregorius in
Moralibus. Omni-
potentis etenim
Dei nos esse disci-
pulos sola custodia
caritatis probat

Scriptum est,
Quicquid tibi con-
tingit, vince boni-
tate maliciam;
nemo quippe
sanctorum ad
celestem gloriam
nisi pacienciam
servando pervenit,
etc.

Scriptum est,
Disce a Christo
modestiam et
leniter tolerabis
injuriam, qui fla-
gellis cesus, spute
deturpatus, clavis
confixus, spinis
coronatus, et
cruce dampnatus,
semper contigit,
et pacienter pro
nobis injurias tol-
leravit, etc.

Scriptum est,
Si quis autem
injuriam pati-
tur, magis dol-
ere debet quod
Deus injurianti
irascitur, quam
de injuria sibi
illata.

Scriptum est,
Nisi pudicitia
primo sedeat
in mente, nulla
perfectio sequi-
tur in opere.

Onely kepyng of charitee us prevethe
That we disciples ben of God almyghty;
What thyng it be that harmethe man or greveth,
By goodnesse it overcome is paciently.
No seint to heven comethe, as rede I,
But by kepyng of pacience, and how
Men may it lere, I wole shewe yow.

Take hede how whan that Crist our sayvour
Was bobbed, and his visage alle bespette,
And grete despite done hym and dishonour,
Bounden and scourgede and grevously bette,
Crowned withe thorne, nailed on the gibette,
Yit for alle this turment no worde he speke,
So was he pacient, benygne, and meke.

And sithen our Lord God was of suche suffraunce,
Than is it to his creature shame
On greef to hym done take ony vengeaunce.
Man ought rather sorwe for the blame
That God shal kun hym that hathe done the grame,
Than for the harme that the greevede hathe hent;
So dothe the charitable and pacient.

To chastitee purpose I now to haste,
Whiche covenant is and convenient
Unto a kyng for to savoure and taste;
What prynce that withe unclennesse is brent,
And therin settethe his lust and talent,
No profitable dede or werk hym folowe may,
But he his hert caste to Goddes pay.

Right as the persone of a prynce outwarde
 Honourede is withe clothes precious,
 So ought his hert clothede be ynwarde
 Withe vertu, and hym kepe vertuous ;
 Fresshe apparaile and hert lecherous
 Unsittyngly is in a prynce joynte,
 Namely in a cristen kyng enoynte.

In as moche as dignitee of a kyng
 Excedethe other folk in reverence,
 The more hym ought peyne hym, lest alle thyng
 Other folk passe in vertuous excellence.
 Honour nought elles is in existence,
 Than reverence yoven in witesse
 Of vertu, as the scripture dothe expresse.

Boecius dicit,
 Honor virtuose
 adquisitus non
 primo per dig-
 nitatem ad-
 quirebatur, sed
 dignitatis honor
 per virtutem
 adquisitus erat,
 etc.

Honour whiche was gotten vertuously
 Ne was not first by dignitee purchacede,
 As that the booke tellethe expressely ;
 But dignitees honours was embracede
 Withe vertu, dignitee hade be unlacede
 And ungurt of honour nade vertu be,
 For vertu hathe her propre dignitee.

Aristotle counceilethe Alisaundre
 To lecherie he not enclyne sholde,
 For it is hogges lyfe, whiche were disclaundre
 To hym yf he the weyes take wolde
 That bestes resonles taken and holde.
 For of body it is distruccioun,
 And eke of alle vertu corrupcioun.

Sithen they that not were of cristen bapteme
 Counceilede men eschue lecherie,
 Than ought us cristen men that vice fleme,
 And suche lustes in us mortifie.
 Who so thynkethe into blisse stie,
 That firy sparkelle algates moste he quenche,
 And lustes leve of lady and of wenche.

Ad Ephes. v^{to}.
 Fornicator non
 habebit heredi-
 tatem in regno
 Christi et Dei.

Ad Ebreos iij^o.
 Fornicatores et
 adulteros judi-
 cabit Deus, etc.

The scripture seithe, no fornicatour
 The reigne of Crist and God shalle enherite;
 It seithe eke that hym and the advoutour
 God deeme shalle, he kan her labour quite
 Fulle sharply, that in tho tweyne delite;
 And so he wole, but yf correccioun
 Be mannes sheelde and his proteccioun.

De castitate
 Scipionis Affri-
 cani.

Affrican Scipio, that noble knyght,
 Whan he was twenty yere and foure of age,
 And by his prowesse, manhode, and myght
 Cartagiens putte had into servage,
 There was a maide sent hym into hostage,
 Of yeres ripe ynoughe and of beautee
 Most excellent that men myghte owher see.

And whan this worthy prince honorable
 This womman saughe, of hir he toke gode yeeme,
 Thynkyng that she was of beautee able
 The worthiest on life for to queeme,
 And in hym multipliede thoughtes breeme;
 But natheles, for alle this besy thought,
 Enquere he gan yf she wyfe were or nought.

She truthede was to Indibal, men seide,
A lorde of that citee, and Scipio
On a mynystre of his the charge leide
For hir fader and moder blive to go.
They at his heste came to hym tho,
And in hir clene virginalle estate
Restorede he this maid inviolate.

The golde eke that for hir redempcioun
Purveyed was foryafe he uttirly,
In helpe and encrece and promocioun
Of hir wedlok; and whan Indiballe sy
And knewe how Scipio thus nobly
Demenede hym, he was fulle wele paide
Of that he grucched first and afraide.

He went to thestates of the toune,
And tolde hem alle the cas, as it befille :
And they this lorde gave laude and hye renoune
For that, and alle withe one hert and wille
Submytted hem to this prynces wille.
Thus hert chaste and tendir gentillesse
Conquerethe rather hertes than duresse.

De castitate
Marci Marcelli.

Or Marcus Marcellus hade the citee
Of Ciracuse taken or ynome,
He lete do crye amonge his meyné,
That whan the citee he hade overcome,
And his folk therin entred were and come,
None be so hardy the wommen to oppresse,
Ne touche hem by wey of unclennesse.

De castitate
cujusdam
juvenis.

There was also a semely fresshe yonge man,
To whom nature suche favour hade lent
Of shappe and beautee, that ther nas womman
That ones hade a looke on hym dispent,
But that hir hert yafe flesshely consent;
And natheles eschued he the taste
Of unclennesse, and kept his body chaste.

By tokens knewe he her unclene entent,
And withe his nailes cracched he his face,
And skocched it withe knyves and torent,
And it so wondirly gan deface,
That beautee refused hade hir place;
Alle this did he hir hertes to remewe
From hym, and hem unclennesse to eschewe.

De castitate
cujusdam fe-
mine Ulie nun-
cupate.

Jerom tellethe ageyne Jovynyan,
A faire womman, a maide, clepede Ulye,
Ywedded was unto an aged man,
A Romaine smytten withe the palsye;
But she in chastité was sette so hye,
That an ensample verray was she
To alle tho that lovede chastitee.

Hir husbonde ones hade an enemy,
Whiche that seide and spake in his repreef,
That his brethe stanke as he stode hym by,
Wherof he toke grete hevynesse and greef;
He gothe home to his wyfe, and this myscheef
Fulle hevily to hir he gan compleyne,
And thus of hir he gan to axe and freyne.

"Why, wife," kothe he, "have ye not or this tyme
Ywarned me how that it withe me stode?"

"Sire, it was not," kothe she, "espied by me,
I helde your brethe ay as swete and gode
As other mennes ben, I undirstode
None other yit, ne do in sothefastnesse."
Fulle fewe men hade she kissed, as I gesse.

She hyely was to preise and to comende,
That nought ne knewe by other mennes mouthes
Hir makes vice, it was alle wele she wende.
For to fynde many suche fulle uncouth is;
Lete us awaite wele whan the wynde southe is
And northe at ones blowyng in the sky,
And fynde suche an hepe than hardely.

De Platonis
castitate.

Plato his patrimonye and his contree
Lefte and forsoke, and dwelt in wildernessse,
For to refreyne flesshely nycetee;
And his disciples loved so clennessse,
And for to falle hade suche gastnesse,
That her eyen out of her hedes they brent,
Lest the sight of hem myght spotte her entent.

Demostenis
castitas.

Demostenus his hondes ones putte
In a wommans bosome japyngly,
Of face faire, but of hir body a slutte;

Nota.

"Withe you to dele," seide he, "what shalle I
You yeve?" "Fourty pens," kothe she, "sothely."
He seide nay, so dere he bye nolde
A thyng for whiche he repent sholde.

De castitate
duarum
filiarum ejus-
dam ducisse.

I fynde how that two doughters of a duchesse,
The flesshely touches of men for to flee,
Whan men of Hungarye hem wolde oppresse,
In conservyng of her virginitee,
They hem purveyede a goode soteltee ;
They chykens flesshe putte undir her pappes,
Hem to defende from unclenly happes.

Beholde of wommen here a noble wile,
Withe short avisement, who kan do bette ;
By that this flesshe thus hade leyne a while,
And that it was ychaufed wele and hette,
It stanke so foule, that it hathe ylette
Tho men, that wery they were of her pray,
And forsoke the wommen, and went her way.

O wommanhede, in the reignethe vertu
So excellent, that to feble is my witte
To expresse it ; wherfore I am eschu
To medle or make a longe sermoun of itte.
Som mannes mouthe yit wolde I were shitte,
That vice to wommen sparethe not to bewrey,
For alle sothes ben not to sey.

But for to talke forthe of contynence,
Or chastitee, who so chaste live shalle
Mote scourge his flesshely lust withe abstinence,
Thriste hym doune, yeve hym no place at alle ;
Metes and drynkes maken a soule thralle,
Yf the body be reuled by excesse,
For thy it nedethe taken of hem the lesse.

Excesse of mete and drynke is wombes frende,
 And wombe is next to our membres pryvee ;
 O glotenye is fulle plesaunt to the fende,
 To lecherie redy patthe is she.
 The fend lithe in awaite of our freelte,
 And stirethe a man to drynkes delicate,
 To make ageyns chastité debate.

A man shulde ete and drynke in suche wise
 As may be to his helthes sustenyng,
 After the doctrine of Senek the wise.
 Som man drynkethe the wyne, that is wenyng,
 When he drynkethe his witte more is preisyng,
 And honorable a man compleyne of thirst,
 Than drunken be whan he the cuppe hathe kist.

Jeronimus ad
 filiam virginem.
 O filia, inquit,
 si apostolus cas-
 tigavit corpus
 suum et in ser-
 vitutem redegit,
 etc.

Thus seide Jerom unto a virgyne,
 " O doughter, sithen that the apostle sore dredde
 Luste of his flesshe, and did his body pyne,
 And helde it lowe, and symply it fedde,
 Wherthurghe the vice of unclennesse he fledde,
 Of contynence how maist thow siker be,
 That of foode delicate hast plentee ? "

Seneca. Si con-
 tinenciam dili-
 gis, circumeide
 superflua et vo-
 luptuosa.

And specially now in thy youthes hete ;
 For who so willethe to be contynent,
 Many a luste superflu mote he lete,
 And likerous, by mesure his talent
 Mesure he mote ; when reson is regent
 Of man, than reignethe no delicacye ;
 Resoun a man defendethe from folie.

The wyne delicate and swete and strong
 Causethe fulle many an inconvenience ;
 Yf that a man outrageousli hem fonge,
 They birien witte, and forbede silence
 Of counseil, they outraien pacience,
 They kyndlen ire, and firen lecherie,
 And causen bothe body and soule to dye.

And truly it is fulle perelous
 Unto a prynce, whiche that hathe a lande
 In governaunce, in that to be vicious ;
 It nedethe hym take hede unto his hande,
 That that vice combre hym not, for and
 It do, he shalle not reigne but a throwe ;
 For many a man hathe excess overthrowe.

Danielis vj°. Eadem nocte interfectus est Baltazar rex Caldeus, et Darius Medus successit in regno, etc.

Of Babiloyne the kyng Baltazar
 Not hade ben ypryvede of his life,
 Yf he of drunkenesse hade be ware ;
 But that therin he was defectife,
 It of his dethe was verray causatife.
 By nyghtertale he was slayn of kyng Darye ;
 Thus payethe glotoun to excesse his salarie.

Regum jo. cº xxvº. Cor Nabal jocundum erat, ebrius enim nimis.

Machabeorum xxvijº. Et cum inebriatus esset Simon et filii ejus, surrexit Tholomeus, etc.

Genes. xixº. Veni, inebriemus eum vino, dormiamusque cum eo.

Thurghe drunkenesse how toke his dethe Naballe ?
 And how slowe Tholomé also Symon ?
 Allas ! that drynke so man serve shalle !
 How leide Lothes doughters hem adoune
 By her fadir ? When his discrecioun
 Was dreynte withe wyne, he withe hem flesshely delt,
 And therof no thyng ne wiste nor felt.

How was eke Olyferne by Judithe
The womman slayne, but thurghe drunkenesse ?
What prynce it be that spotted is therwithe,
His welthe hathe but a brotille stablenesse ;
Of whiche stories mo wolde I expresse,
But for I ne kan, I lete hem passe,
I am as lewde and dulle as is an asse.

Withe litelle foode content is nature,
And bette the body farethe withe a lite
Then whan it charged is out of mesure.
Loke what thyng may the body profite,
And the soule shalle in the same delite ;
What thyng distemprethe it or disesethe,
The soule it hurtethe, for it God displesethe.

Wratthe the body of man inwarde fretethe,
And therwithe God displesed is fulle sore ;
Envye also of God and man hir getethe
Like thank and ese, and shalle done evermore ;
And lecherie, as techethe smertes lore,
The body it wastethe and the soule grevethe,
And foode delicate therto men mevethe.

Beholde also, whan the paunche is fulle,
A fume clymbethe up into the hede,
And makethe a man alle lustles and alle dulle,
He wexethe hevy as a pece of lede.
Who so that than shulde yeve hym rede,
To loke in a booke of devocioun,
I trowe in ydelle were his occupacioun.

But counceile hym to trotte unto the wyne,
And, for alle his excesse and outrage,
He therto wole assent wele afyne,
And there wole he uttre his langage,
And do to Bacus and Venus homage;
For none of hem kan wele be from other,
They loven as wele as suster and brother.

And after mote he rowne withe a pilwe,
His lyfeles resons there to despende.
We bestes resonable, alas! why wil we
Ageyn resoun werrey, and hir offende.
O goode God, thy grace to us sende,
That we may flee suche superfluitee,
And alle thyng that is foo to chastitee.

Of magnanymytee now wole I trete,
That is to sey, strong hert or grete corage,
Whiche in knyghthode hathe stablissed hir sete.
Ye, gracious prynce, of blode and of lynage
Descended ben to have in usage,
Mars hathe ever be frende to your worthy lyne,
Ye mote of kynde to manhode enclyne.

He that is strong of corage and of hert,
Yf he worship have or grete richesse,
Or that fortune styng hym overthwert,
Is alwey one in welthe and in distresse.
He lucre and losse weieth in evennesse;
He settethe litelle by goode temporelle,
How ever the worlde shape, he takethe it ay welle.

But for to speke of corage of a kyng,
He of his peple owethe be so chere,
That her profite he mote for eny thyng
Promote withe his myght and his powere ;
And for his reame hym take so nere,
That unto perels of bataile
He mote hym putte, and hym travaile.

And in defence of holy chirche also,
And for our feithe putte hym in juperdie.
Other causes ben there but fewe mo
Why a kyng ought to bataile him hie,
And in tho causes drede hym not to dye,
But kithe hym a goode knyght amonge his foos ;
Thus wonne is magnanymytes loos.

Right as we seen by resoun and nature
Part of mannes body defendethe alle ;
As an arme puttethe hym in aventure
For the body, that not perisshe it shalle,
Right so a kynges cheerté specialle,
Yf he God love and his peple and lande,
Whan nede is, mote defende it with his hande.

Thurghe grete emprises wonne is hye renoune,
Renoune is called glorie and honour ;
Magnanimitee hathe this condicioune,
That in bataile, how sharp be the stour,
Hym lever is to suffre dethes showr
Than cowardly and shamefully flee,
So manly of corage and hert is he.

He medlethe never but of thynges grete
And hye and vertuous, he never is mevede
With smale thynges, as the booke dothe trete ;
And suche a drede hathe for to be repreved,
That unto thyng that may be knowe or prevede
For vileynous, or foule, or reprevable,
He never obeyethe, this knyght honourable.

I have yredde of one clept Coadrus,
That was prynce of the oste Athynyens,
How in the felde a lawe made was thus
Twixte his oste and hem of Polypolens,
Withe tryumphe shulde that part go thens
Whos duke or prynce were unarmede slawe,
In habite straunge, lo, suche was the lawe.

Hym lever was hym self for to dye,
And his men leve, than see hem bestadde
So streite, that by violent maistrie
His foes hade hem venguysshede or overladde.
Adayes now is none suche cheertee hade ;
Algates I ne kan not seen it used,
Knyghtes ben lothe therof to ben accusede.

O worthy prynce, I trust in your manhode,
Medled withe prudence and discrecioun,
That ye shulle make many a knyghtly rode,
And the pride of our foes threste adoune.
Manhode and witte conqueren hye renoune ;
And who so lakkethe eny of the tweyne,
Of armes wantethe the bridelle and the reyne.

Yf the ordre of knyghthode be receyvede,
 Fulle nedefulle is a man to be prudent,
 Elles that oste may lightly be deceyvede
 That is unto her governaunce ybent;
 Presumptuous is disobedient
 Alday, and not by wisdom wole hym gye,
 Alle justifieth his obstynacie.

Ofte in bataile hathe be seen or this
 A side suffred to have discomfiture,
 Whiche an unwise hede gyed hathe amys.
 What knyght on hym takethe that charge or cure,
 Yf he in knyghtly honour shalle endure,
 Hym ought endowed be in sapience,
 And have in armes grete experience.

Nota. De mi-
 licia.

Experience and arte in a bataile
 Of the prudent knyght, more may profite
 Than hardynesse or force may availe
 Of hym that therof knowethe nought or lite.
 Hardynesse in effect not worthe a myte
 Is to victorious conclusioun,
 But withe hym medle arte, witte, and resoun.

Whan reuled witte and manly hardynesse
 Ben knytte togider, as yok of mariage,
 There folowethe of victorie the swetnesse,
 For to sette on hym whettethe his corage,
 And witte restreyne his wille kan and swage,
 In tyme good, and due and covenable;
 And thus tho two joynt benne fulle profitable.

But be a knyght wise and corageous,
Or have hem bothe at ones at his luste,
If that his hert of goode be desirous,
On his manhode is ther but litelle truste.
God graunte knyghtes rubbe away the ruste
Of covetise, yf it her hertes cankir,
And graunte hem to picche in suffisaunce an ankir.

Now for as muche as magnanymytee
May no foote holde, yf that the hert of man
Gretely unto ricchesse enclyned be,
Than is the best rede that I see kan,
A kyng therin delite hym not, for whan
His hert is in that vice ficchede hye,
Smalle prowesse in hym wole it signifie.

And yf a kynges honour shalle be queynte
Withe a fowle and a cursed covetise,
His peples trust in hym shalle be but feynte.
A kyng ne may not governe hym in that wise.
The coveitous may do no grete emprise;
For whan his hert lurkethe in his cofre,
His body in bataile dar he not profre.

Yf that a kyng sette his felicitee
Principalle on richesse and on money,
His peple it turnethe to adversitee,
For he ne rekkethe in what wise or wey
He pylle hem; alas! that kynges nobley
Turne shulde into stile of tyrannye;
Allas! the perelle, harme, and vilanye!

God I beseche your hert to enlumyne,
 Gracious prynce, that the fende, our foo,
 No power have so your hert to myne,
 But of his grace so kepe you therfro,
 And graunte you to governe you so,
 As most holosome is for body and soule;
 That desire I, by God and by seint Poule.

Qualiter Marcus
 Curcius dixit
 quod mallet
 habere divites
 suo obedientes
 mandato quam
 dives ipsemet
 fieri.

Whan that Marcus Curcius, a Romaine,
 Unto the Beneventans a siege leide,
 For he was poore, as that they herde sayne,
 They a grete somme of golde hym sent, and preide
 Withdrawe his seege; and he answerde and seide,
 "To hym retournethe that you hider sent,
 And thus to hym declarethe myne entent.

Sey hem Marcus Curcius lever is
 Riche men to have at his comaundement,
 Than to be riche hym self; telle hym this,
 He may withe golde not be corrupt ne blent,
 Of force of men eke they ben impotent
 To venquysshe hym, for there her art shalle faile,
 Her blynde profres shalle hem not availe."

Nota, qualiter
 quidam miles
 Alexandri
 arguebat eum
 de sua cupidi-
 tate.

To Alisaundre, as I shalle letten here,
 A knyght, whiche was to hym speciale,
 Thus spake, and blamed hym in this manere;
 He seide, "Yf our goddes thy body smalle
 To thy gredy desire hade made egalle,
 Alle the worlde hade not be suffisaunt
 To have receyvede so large a jeaunt.

For withe thy right honde thow the orient
 Shuldest have touchede, I am sure of that;
 And withe thy lift honde eke the occident.
 Now sithen thy body answerethe nat
 Unto thy wille, what shalle I sey, what?
 Outher thow art a man, or a god, or nought;
 Mochelle of the mervaille I in my thought.

Yf thow be god, folowe most his trace,
 And not men of her goode robbe nor reve;
 But hem releeve, and hem ese and grace.
 If thow be man, considre eke, by thy leve,
 Thou art mortal, thou maist be dede or eve.
 If thou be no thyng, the putte out of mynde,
 As he that is no nature of kynde.

There is none hye estate so sadde and stable,
 Remembre wele, lete it not be foryete,
 But he to falle in perelle is fulle able;
 By dethe a lyoun made is briddes mete,
 And bestes also his flesshe gnawe and frete."
 The answeere of the kyng not have I herde,
 My booke not tellethe how he was answerde.

Seneca dicit,
 Pauper Diogenes
 dicior erat Alexandro.

Senek seithe the poore Diogenes
 Kyng Alisaundre in riches past;
 For he ne myght, as he seithe douteles,
 Yeve hym so mochel golde ne on hym cast
 As he refuse wolde. O atte last
 Men thynken shulle they to moche have hade,
 And of this worldes muk be fulle unglade.

Desire of goode a kyng mote ley apart,
And peyne hym to purchace hym a goode fame ;
Therin lete hym laboure and do his part,
Ther is no thyng unto worthy name.
And yf a kyng it lakke, it were his shame ;
And shame is contrarie unto worthynesse ;
Good loos decerned is grettest richesse.

And for largesse wynneth gode renoune,
Therof thynke I now to trete a litelle stounde.
A prynce and a kyng of alle a regioun
Mote avarice threste doune to grounde ;
To hym that lithe in helle deepe ybounde
The, avarice, betake I to kepe ;
Thou pynchepeny, there ay mote thou slepe.

Golde wolde for fals prisonyng a writte
Sue ageyne the, yf he at large were ;
But he so fast is in thy cofre shytte,
He may not out. O fals prisonere,
Largesse wolde be withe shelde and spere
Even in thy berde, yf he brake out to morwe,
And for his sake do the care and sorwe.

Thow to largesse doost fulle mochelle wronge,
That hast hir servaunt undir thy servage ;
On the and not on hir it is alonge
That golde is lette to go on hir message.
She hathe hym sent on many a viage
Or this, and that was the comon profite,
The whiche to lette is ever thy delite.

Largesse onely not luste golde servaunt be
 Unto hir self, but the peple she wolde
 Hade as gode part of hir service as she.
 To hir is alle the comon peple yholde ;
 But thou makest the peples hertes colde ;
 Thou sleest an hepe whiche that she wolde save,
 Thou no wight helpest, thoughe he thyne help crave.

Me liste nomore speke of the this tyme,
 But of myne helpely lady sovereyne ;
 Of largesse, my lady, now wold I ryme,
 And afterwarde of thy cursed careyne
 I speke shalle, not a worde wole I feyne,
 But as scriptures treten of the wrecche,
 I touche shalle, the develle the hens fecche !

Aristotiles de
 Prin. re. c^o de
 largitate, dicit,
 Si vis virtutem
 largitatis acqui-
 rere, considera
 posse tuum, tem-
 pora necessita-
 tis, et merita
 hominum, etc.

Aristotle of largesse tellethe thus,
 How vertuous largesse lust to be,
 Considre first of what power he is,
 And eke the tymes of necessitee,
 And as the men deserven so be free,
 Yeve in mesure to the indigent,
 And the worthy, and that is wele dispent.

Qui aliter dat,
 regulam excedit
 largitatis, qui lar-
 giter bona sua ho-
 minibus non indi-
 gentibus nulla, et
 quicquid datur in-
 dignis perditur, et
 qui fundit ultra
 modum divicias
 suas, cito veniet ad
 amara litora pau-
 pertatis, et assim-
 ilatur illi qui vic-
 toriam super se
 dat inimicis suis,
 etc.

And who dothe otherwise in his yevyng,
 Largesses reule passethe and excedethe,
 He neither worthy is thonke ne preisyng,
 That to hym that no nede hathe yiftes bedethe.
 Of verray folye also it procedethe
 To yeve the unworthy, for the coste
 Alle mysdespendede is. for it is loste.

And he that dispendethe out of mesure,
Shalle taste anone povertes bitternesse ;
Fool largesse is therto a verray lure.
Of hym also he berethe the liknesse,
That on hym self, as the boke berethe witnesse,
Victorie yevethe to his enemyse ;
And he that so dispendethe is not wise.

Largesse stont not in moche yevyng,
But it is after the wille and the myght
Of hym that yeveth after his havyng.
For it may somtyme happe that a wight,
Whiche of ricchesse berethe not but light,
Yevethe but smalle, and yit larger is he
Than he that yevethe gretter quantitee.

After his goode man may yeve and dispende
Where as nede is, but he that alle dispendethe
And wastethe, shalle hym self first offende.
Foole large alday wrecchedly endethe,
Many a man here foule outrage hem shendethe ;
But of largesses goode governaunce
Bothe to God and to man it is plesaunce.

Even as a mannes bloode is norisshyng
To his body, yf it corrupte not be,
So ben riches to soules fedyng
Holsom, yf they were as necessitee
Axethe dispend, and also yf he
Whiche that hem wan, gate hem with rightwisnesse ;
For heven and helle ben goten by riches.

A croked hors never the better is entecchede,
 Althoughe his bridelle glistre of golde and shyne;
 Right so a man that vicious is and wrecchede,
 And his richesse gotten hathe of rapyne,
 And as evylle as man kan ymagyne
 Dispendethe hem, not for hem the better is,
 But moche wers, gode is to take hede of this.

He that his flesshe dispendethe and his blode,
 My lorde, in your service, hym yiftes bede;
 Ther is largesse mesurable goode.
 A kyng so bounden is, he mote do so nede,
 Service unquytte and murdre it is no drede,
 As clerkes writen, and disheritaunce,
 Before almyghty God axen vengeaunce.

Nota, de prodi-
 galitate ejus-
 dam Johannis
 de Canacia.

Of foole largesse wole I talke a space,
 How it befille, I note in what contree,
 But ther was one named Johan of Canace,
 A riche man, and two doughters hade he,
 That unto twey worthy men of a citee
 He wedden lete; and ther was gladnesse
 And revelle more than I kan expresse.

The fader his doughters and her husbondes
 Loved fulle wele, and hade hem leef and dere;
 Tyme and tyme he yafe hem withe his hondes
 Of his goode passyngly, and they suche chere
 Hym made, and were so plesaunt manere,
 That he ne wist how to be better at ese,
 They coude hym so wele cherisshe and plese.

For he as muche haunted in partie
Her hous as he did his owen hous.
They helde hym up with her flatrye,
That of dispence he was outrageous ;
And of goode they were ay desirous ;
Alle that they axed haden they redy,
And they ever were on hym gredy.

This sely man contynued his outrage,
Til alle his goode was wasted and gone ;
And they felt his expenses swage,
And were to hym unkynde right anone.
For after hade he cherisshyng none ;
They wery were of his companye,
And he was wise and shope a remedye.

He to a marchaunt gothe of his notice,
Whiche that his trusty frende hade be fulle yore,
Besechyng hym that he wolde hym chevyce
Of ten thousande ponde, ne lenger ne more
Than dayes thre, and he wolde it restore
At his day ; this was done, the somme he hent,
And to his owen hous therwithe he went.

And on the morwe praide he to sopere
His sones bothe, and his doughters also.
They to hym came, withouten eny daungere ;
How that they ferde lete it passe and go.
They ferden wele, without wordes mo.
To his kunnyng grete disport he hem made,
He did his myght to chere hem and glade.

After soper, whan they her tyme sye,
They toke her leve, and home they wolde algate;
And he answerde and seide hem sikerly,
“This nyght shulle ye not passe out at this yate,
Your hous is ferre, and it is derk and late;
Speke it not, for it shalle not betide.”
And so alle nyght he made hem to abide.

The fader logged hem, of sly purpos,
In a chambre next to his joynnyng.
But betwixt hem nas ther but a parclos
Of borde, not but of homely makyng;
Thurgheout the whiche, at many a chynnyng,
In eche chambre they myghten beholde
And see what other did, yf that they wolde.

I kan not sey how they slept that nyght,
Also it longethe not to my matere;
But on the morwe, at brode day light,
The fader roos, and for they shulde here
What that he did, in a boistous manere
Unto his chest, whiche thre lokkes hadde,
He went, and therat wrestede he fulle sadde.

And whan it was yopenede and unshette,
The bagged golde that the marchaunt hym lent
He hathe uncofrede, and streightforthe with it
Unto his beddes fete gone is and went.
What dothe than this felle man and prudent,
But out this golde on a tapite hathe shotte,
That in the bagges left ther no grotte?

And alle this did he not but for a wile,
As that ye shulle wele knowe afterwarde;
He shope his sones and doughtres to begile.
His noise made hem dresse hem upwarde;
They caste her eres to his chamberwarde,
And herde of golde the russhyng and the sounes,
As that he rudely threwe hem adoune.

And to the parclos they hem haste and hye,
To wite and knowe what her fader wrought.
In at the chynnes of the bordes they pryde,
And sye how he amonge the nobles sought
Yf defectyfe were eny, as hym thought;
And one his naile he threwe hem ofte and caste,
And bagged hem and coffrede hem at the laste.

And openede his dore, and doune gothe his wey.
And after blive out of her bedde they rise,
And came doune blive, her fader thanken they
Of his goode chere in her best wise,
And alle was for the golde covetise.
And to gone home they axed of hym leve;
They ben departede, and there they hym leve.

Walkyng homwarde they jangled fast, and speke
Of the golde whiche they sawe her fader have.
One seide, "I wonder theron;" "And I eke,"
Kothe another, "for, also God me save,
Yisterday, thoughe I shulde in to my grave
Have crept, I durst on it have leide my lyfe,
That golde withe hym not hade be so ryfe."

Now lete hem muse on that what so hem leste ;
And to her fader now wole I me dresse.
He alle this golde now takethe out of his cheste,
And to the marchaunt paid it more and lesse,
Thankyng hym ofte of his kyndnesse ;
And thens gothe he home unto his mete,
And to his sones hous whan he hade ete.

Whan he came thider, they made of hym more
Than that they were wont, by many folde ;
So grete disport they made hym not fulle yore.
“Fader,” kothe they, “this is your owen housholde ;
In feithe ther is no thyng within our holde,
But it shalle be at your comaundement.
Wolde God that ye were of our assent,

Than we shulde ay togider dwelle.”
Alle what they menten wist he wel ynoughe.
“Sones and doughters,” kothe he, “sothe to telle,
My wille is goode also to be withe yow.
How shulde I merier be ? not wote I how,
Than withe you for to be contynuelle ;
Your companye likethe me fulle welle.”

Now shope it so they helde hous in fere
Save the fader, and as they loughe and pleide,
His doughtres bothe withe laughyng chere
Unto her fader spake, and thus they seide,
And to assoile her questioun hym preide.
“What so ever it be,” kothe the fader, “now
And I kan or may, I shalle it telle yow.”

“ Now, goode fader, how much money
In your stronge bounde cheste is, I you prey ?
“ Ten thousand pounde,” kothe he, and lyed lowde.
“ I tolde hem,” kothe he, “ not fulle longe ago,
And that as redily as that I coude.
Yf ye wille after this do to me so
As ye have done, ye shulle have alle tho.”

After this day they alle in one hous were,
Til the day come of her faders dying ;
Goode mete and drynke and clothes for to were
He hade, and paide nought to his endyng.
Whan he sawe the tyme of his departyng,
His sones and his doughters did he calle,
And in this wise he spake to hem alle.

“ Not purpose I to make other testament,
But of that is in my stronge chest ybounde ;
And right anone, or I be hens hent,
An hundrede pounde of nobles gode and rounde
Takethe to the prechours, tariethe it no stounde ;
An hundred pounde eke to the freres grey ;
And to karmes fifty ; tarye not, I you prey.

And whan I buried am, of hem the keyes
Of my cheste takethe, for they hem kepe ;
By every key writen ben the weyes
Of my wille.” This golde was not suffrede slepe,
It was anone delt, for her hertes depe
Stak in his bounden coffre, and alle her hope
Was goode bagges, therynne for to grope.

To every chirche and recluse of the toun
 Bade he yeve eke of golde a quantitee;
 Alle as he bade, thei were prest and boune,
 And did it blive. But, so mote I thee,
 Fully slily deceyvede he this meyné,
 His sones and his doughtres bothe I mene;
 Her berdes shaved he bothe smothe and clene.

Whan he was dede, and his obsequies do
 Solempnely, they to the freres yede,
 And bade tho keyes deliver hem unto;
 And as they hem beden so they dede.
 Tho joyfulle sones dresen hem to the stede
 Where as the strong bounden chest stoode,
 But or they twynned thens they pekked moode.

They opened the cheste, and fonde right nought
 But a passyng grete sergeantes mace,
 In whiche there gaily made was and wrought
 This same scripture, "I, Johan of Canace,
 Make suche testament here in this place;
 Who berethe charge of other men, and is
 Of hem dispisede, slayne be he with this."

Amonge folies alle, is none I leeve
 More than a man his goode foole largely
 Dispende, in hope men wole hym releeve.
 Whan his goode is dispent uttirly,
 The indigent men sette no thyng therby.

Nota, de prodi-
 galitate
 Occleve.

I, Occleve, in suche caas am gilty, this me touchethe,
 So seithe povert, that on foole large hym vouchethe.

For thoughe I never were of hye degree,
Ne hade moche goode, ne grete richesse,
Yit hathe the vice of prodegalitee
Smertede me, and do me hevynesse.
He that but litelle hathe may done excesse
In his degree, as wele as may the riche,
Thoughe her dispenses be not eliche.

So have I plucked at my purses strenges,
And made hem oft for to gape and gane;
That his smalle stuffe hathe take hym to his wenges,
And hathe sworne to be my welthes bane,
But yf releef my sorwe away plane;
And whens it come shalle kan I not gesse,
My lord, but it procede of your hyenesse.

I me repente of my mysreulede lyfe;
Wherfore in the wey of savacioun
I hope I be, my dotage excessife
Hathe putte me to suche castigacioun,
That indigence hathe domynacioun
Of me; O hade I helpe, now wolde I thrive,
And so did I never yit in my live.

My yerely guerdoun, myne annuitee,
That was me grauntede for my longe labour,
Is alle behynde, I may not paide be;
Whiche causethe me to live in langour.
O liberalle prynce, ensauple of honour,
Unto your grace like it to promote
My poore estate, and to my woo bethe boote.

And, worthy prynce, at Cristes reverence,
 Herkenethe what I shalle sey, and bethe not grevede,
 But lete me stonde in your benevolence;
 For yf myne hertes wille wist were and prevede,
 How yow to love it sterede is and mevede,
 Ye shulde knowe, I your honour and welthe
 Thurste and desire, and eke your soules helthe.

In alle my booke ye shalle not see ne fynde
 That I your dedes lak, or hem dispreise;
 But that I wolde that ye hade in mynde
 Suche thyng as your renoune myght upreise.
 I write as my symple conceyte may peise;
 Truste wele, alle that my penne seithe
 Procedethe of goode hert and trewe in feithe.

Aristotiles dere.
 prin. c^o de vicio
 superfluitatis.
 O Alexander,
 firmiter dico tibi
 quod quisquis
 rerum contule-
 rit domina-
 ciones superflue
 ultra quod reg-
 num suum
 possit sufficere,
 talis rex pro-
 cul dubio des-
 truit et destrui-
 tur.

What kyng that dothe more excessife dispences
 Than his lande may to suffice or atteyne,
 Shalle be distroyede, after the sentences
 Of Aristotle, he shalle not flee the peyne.
 Foole largesse and avarice, tho tweyne,
 Yf that a kyng eschewe, and large be,
 Rejoise shalle he his roial dignitee.

How foole largesse a kyng distroye may
 As blive wole I unto you declare.
 Foole largesse yevethe so muche away,
 That it the kynges cofres makethe bare;
 And than awakethe poore peples care,
 For alle that she dispendede hathe and wastede,
 They mote releve, therto ben they hastede.

The tilyer withe his poore cote and lande,
 That may unnethes gete his sustenaunce,
 And that hathe nought but by labour of hande,
 Is oft putte unto fulle grete noisaunce.
 Goode is beware of Goddes long suffraunce,
 Thoughe he to venge hym tarye and be suffrable,
 Whan the stroke comethe it is importable.

Nought speke I ageyn dysmes uttirly;
 In some cas they ben goode and necessarie;
 And whan they gone to incustumably,
 The peple it maketh to grucche and warie.
 And yf they be dispended in contrarie
 Of that they graunted of the peple were,
 The more grucchen they the coste to bere.

The potte so longe to the water gothe,
 That home it comethe atte last ybroke.
 Whan that the peple, withe a chere lothe,
 Her purses emptede have, and eke her poke,
 Hem thynkethe that they to ny ben soke.
 What harme of that to kynges hathe betidde,
 It may not be helede in no wise ne hidde.

Deficientibus
 redditibus et
 expensis, reges
 extenderunt
 manus suas ad
 res et redditus
 alienorum, sub-
 diti vero prop-
 ter injuriam
 clamaverunt ad
 Deum excelsum
 et gloriosum,
 etc.

But favelle not reportethe tho scriptures,
 His lordes soules salve fro hym he hidethe:
 He bisiethe hym in so sly portratures,
 That homely trouthe not withe hym abidethe.
 The swete venyme of his tonge gidethe
 His lord unto the valey of derkenesse,
 And he governe hym by his fikelnesse.

The trewe man, yf that he may apperceyve
 A defaute in his lorde, as otherwhile
 It happethe, he his lorde it redethe weyve,
 And bitte hym to vertu hym reconcile;
 And yit favelle, the nette of fraude and gile,
 The thanke hathe, and that other the maugree.
 O God, that verray trouthe art for to see !

Augustinus,
 Quisquis metu
 alicujus potes-
 tatis veritatem
 occultat, iram
 Dei super se
 provocat, quia
 magis timet ho-
 minem quam
 Deum, etc.

Who that, for drede of ony lorde or sire,
 Hidethe the trouthe, and wille it not outsey,
 He upone hym provokethe Goddes ire,
 For that he more of man than God hathe ey.
 They that the trouthe of hertes bewrey
 To lordes, and tellen hem her wikked lyfe,
 No grace in hym fynde for her motife.

Scriptum est,
 Libere
 veritatem
 predicantes et
 prave vite gesta
 arguentes, non
 habent gratiam
 apud homines,
 etc.

But bette for trouthe is to suffre turment,
 Than richely enhaunced be for glose.
 Yf this lyfe here be not wele dispent,
 I wote it wele, I wole it not suppose,
 God wole his regne from us hide and close.
 Here is the way to peyne or to blis,
 Who so wele dothe, of joye he may not mys.

Augustinus.
 Melius est pro ve-
 ritate pati sup-
 plicium, quam pro
 adulacione bene-
 ficiū, etc.

Eternal God, the blissed trinité,
 Whiche that every man of cristen bileeve
 Knowethe, and undevided unité,
 His mercy and his grace kithe and preve
 In you, my lorde, so that your dedes cheve,
 As that your soule after this lyfe present
 To heven blis may be take and hent.

Now go we to the avaricious,
 To whom none abundaunce may suffise.
 A chynche never kan be plentevous,
 Though alle were his, suche is his covetise ;
 To thruste ay after more it is his gise.
 He is the swolwe that is never fulle ;
 At avarice now have here a pulle.

She may, as God forbede, undo a kyng
 Thurghe hir insatiable gredynesse.
 Hir hert is sette upone none other thyng,
 But she may golde hepe, alle in derknesse
 Lurkethe the purchas of hir egrnesse ;
 In bagges undir lokke hir golde she threstethe,
 Alle to the cofre it gothe, and alle she chestethe.

Negandi causa
 nunquam avaro
 deficit.

There is it hidde, no sonne it sethe ne moone ;
 Though alle the worlde sterve shulde on a day,
 For lakke of goode not were it for to done,
 To borwe of hir, ever hir answer is nay,
 That she nought hathe also she swerethe ay ;
 Hir nature is to kepe and not dispende,
 And hir desire of goode hathe none ende.

Scriptum est,
 Avaricia est amor
 immoderatus ad-
 quirendi tem-
 poralia, et est pes-
 tis fere omnes
 homines solici-
 tans. Unde pro-
 pheta ait, Jeremye
 vjo. A majori us-
 que ad minorem
 omnes student
 avariciam, etc.
 Avaricia est ydolo-
 rum servitus.

Avarice is a love immoderate
 Richesse temporelle for to purchase ;
 She desirethe hye in every estate ;
 She shapethe hir alle the worlde to embrace,
 Fro the more to the lesse hir trace
 To sewe studien men, seithe Ysaye ;
 And she the thraldome is of mawmetrie.

She is a covetise excessife
 Of other mennes goode, and of hir owen she
 So streyte and harde is, and so retentife,
 That it profite may in no degree.
 O avaricious, what eilethe the ?
 The goodes whiche that ben unto the lent,
 Why hidest thou ? ywis thou wolt be shent.

Neque enim,
 minus est
 criminis
 habenti tollere,
 quam cum pos-
 sis et habundans
 sis, indigentibus
 necessaria dene-
 gare, etc.

Wenest thou, that thou dost not wikkedly
 That so many mannes sustenaunce
 Thy self withholdest so ? yis hardely.
 Thou that of riches hast grete abundaunce,
 And to the nedy yvest no pitaunce,
 No lesse offendest thou, than he that shakethe
 Men out of her goode, and fro hem it takethe.

Thus may thy stile yliknede be to thefte ;
 As a theef in this worlde is honged here
 For gode whiche he of the peple refte,
 So shalt thou honge in helle, and bye it dere,
 But yf so be, or thou go to thy bere,
 Thou correcte thy greedy appetite,
 And of streit kepyng empte thy delite.

Scriptum est,
 Esuriencium panis
 est quem tu de-
 tines, nudorum
 vestimentum est
 quod tu recludis,
 tantorum te scias
 invadere bona
 quantorum de
 possessione tua
 subvenire potes
 et non vis.

The brede of the hungry peple thou withholdest,
 And shettest up the naked mannes clothe
 That cover hem shulde ; yf thou ought of god toldest,
 For to do so, thou woldest be fulle lothe.
 Alle that thou getest to hidde place it gothe,
 As many men her goode thou hem revest,
 As thou releve myghtest, and thou it levest.

Prov. xx°. Qui
obturat aurem
suam ad clamorem
pauperis, ipse
clamabit et non
exaudietur.

Item, qui odit
avariciam, longe
fient dies ejus.
Eccâ, x°. Nichil
iniquius quam
amare pecuniam,
etc.

Ambrosius de
Off. Caveas ne
intra loculos
tuos includas
salutem in-
opum, et tan-
quam in tumu-
lo ne sepelias
bona pauperum,
etc.

sc. tempore ne-
cessitatis.

Ysaie xix°. De
terra loqueris, et
de humo exaudie-
tur eloquium
tuum, propter
amorem quem
habes ad sordes,
etc.

Luce xijo. Cui
multum datum
est, multum
queretur ab eo a
Deo et hominibus,
etc.

Wo so that fro the poore mannes cry
Stoppethe his eres, thoughe he lowde crye,
Shalle not ben herde; and moreover rede I,
His dayes shulle encrece and multiplie
That avarise hatethe, that is no lye.
Wers is no thyng than to love money,
As that the Ecclesiastres kan sey.

Ambrose seithe, "Ware, man, that thou ne shitte
Withein thy purs the nedy peples hele,
And to the buriels not commytte
The lyfe of poore men; yeve hem and dele
Part of thy goode, o thy bagges unsele,
Open hem, her knyttyng alle to sore anoiethe,
Thy pyned stuffe many man distroieth.

Thou seyest percaas, "Yf I noman bireve
His good with wronge, myne owen it is to hide
And multiplie." O chynche, by thy leve,
What seyest thou is thyne, what was thyne that tide
Thou came into this worlde, thou homycide;
Thou broughtest not clayme ne propretee
Of thing that ought comon to be.

Thy talkyng and thy clappyng is alle of erthe,
And the grounde for thy shalle answeere the;
For that the love of muk sitte so ner the,
Of hym that hathe of goodes so grete plentee
Of god and man mochelle axed shalle be.
Thou shalt be reckenede withe there as a chynche,
Where as thou shalt not at thyne accountes pynche.

By what title that thou getest thy goode,
 Thou countest not the value of a myte;
 Thyn hert is evermore on golde so woode,
 That in no thyng elles kanst thow delite.
 Of conscience rekkest thou so lite,
 What goodes thou getest of rapyne
 Thou hem afferrest by goode title thyne.

Salustinus dicit,
 Avaricia fidem
 et probitatem
 subpeditat, et
 docet hominem
 in se superbiam
 et crudelitatem
 habere, etc.

Feithe and prowesse leyst thou under foote,
 And techest folk to have in hem pride;
 And crueltee hathe caught the in suche roote,
 That she ne slippe may fro the ne slide.
 And every vertu throwest thou aside;
 O every prynce and kyng mote ben eschu,
 In alle maner, of thy lyme and thy glu.

For elles it is light to undirstonde
 To every man that witte kan and resoun,
 Is is not likly a kyng for to stonde
 In his welthe but a litelle sesoun,
 For avarice may ben enchesoun
 His peple to distroien and oppresse;
 And, as I sey, so may foole largesse.

Foole largesse is a sikennesse curable
 Outher of indigence, or elles of age;
 He that foole large is in youthe is fulle able
 In elde to abate it and asswage.
 For aged folk ben more in the servage
 Of avarice than ben folke in youthe;
 And what I shalle eke seyne, herkenethe nouthe.

Of nede eke may it ben cured and helede,
 A man may to large dispenses make,
 Til alle his goode be dispended and deled.
 And whan his purs emptied is and shake,
 Than begynneth indigence to awake,
 By whiche he currede is of the sikenesse
 Of prodigalitee, or of foole largesse.

But avarice, he seithe, uncurable is;
 For ay the more a man therin procedethe,
 And wexethe olde, so much more ywis
 He avaricious is, in hym not bredethe
 But thought and wo, for ay his hert dredethe
 His goode to lese, and more for to hepe
 His thoughtes stynten, here and there to kepe.

Now yf the hede of alle, a regioun
 By whom that alle governede is and gyed,
 Be of so sikely a condicioun
 That it may by no cure be maistriede,
 Than is he to the wers part applied;
 And as the filosofre seithe us to,
 The lesse wik is foole large of the two.

Probat philosophus
 iii^o iij^o ethicorum
 iij^o iij^o iij^o iij^o iij^o
 quod avaricia
 peior est prodigalitate;
 primo enim melius est
 infirmari morbo
 curabili quam
 incurabili; prodigalitas
 est morbus curabilis
 ab egestate vel ab
 etate, sed avaricia
 est morbus incurabilis,
 etc.

The filosofre preveth avarice
 Wel wers than is prodigalitee;
 By thre causes he holt it gretter vice.
 First, he seithe it is better sike to be
 Of a sikenesse or infirmitee
 Of whiche a man may have recoveryng,
 Than of suche one as there is none helyng.

ij^o patet quod
prodigalitas
magis est pro-
pinqua virtuti
quam avaricia;
nam liberalis
non libenter
recipit, sed
libenter dat,
quorum utrum-
que facit pro-
digus.

The seconde cause is, prodigalitee
Is more nye to vertu many dele
Than avarice, and why ye shalle wele see :
He that is liberalle not luste so wele
For to receyve ony goode or catelle
As yeve, but what man that is foole large
To take and yeve yiftes hathe he no charge.

Non ergo differt
prodigus a libe-
ralitate, nisi
quod prodigus
non dat ut
debet nec
cujus gratia
debet, quare
cum prodigus
non sit amator
pecunie sicut
nec liberalis,
de facili prodig-
us fieri possit
liberalis, etc.

Wherefore he seithe, ther is no difference
Betwixt foole large and liberalitee,
Save the foole large of his imprudence
Of his dispences is to lavee,
And yevethe there as ought not to be;
And for what cause also and for what skille
He yeve shalle, none hede take he wille.

And sithen foole large on golde settethe his hert
Nomore than the liberalle, than may
Foole large into liberalitee stert
Lightly ynoughe; for vertu is kynges pray.
He avarice eschewe mote alway,
Because she more is contrarious
To vertu than the large outrageous.

Tercio, quia
rex est positus
in regno propter
salutem regni,
et ut prosit hiis
qui in regno
sunt, avarus
autem nulli
prodest.

The thirde skile is, for a kyng is sette
In his reame for his peples ese and releef,
For they shulde for hym fare the bette;
But the streit chynche quenchethe never greef,
His golde is never salve to myscheef,
Onely to gadre and kepe he hym delitethe,
But the foole large many man profitethe.

Idem dicit quod largitas est ad similitudinem vasorum; vasa enim habencia os largum abunde emittunt quod in eis est.

Yit vices ben they grete bothe tweyne ;
O worthy prince, take on you largesse ;
Dothe so, o gracious lorde, for Goddes peyne ;
Largesse yputte is unto the lyknesse
Of vessels whos mouthes han grete widnesse,
And hilden out her licour abundantly,
Thus seithe the filosofre truly.

Cum ergo tanto deceat fontem habere largum os quanto ex eo plures participare debent, tanto decet regem largiorem esse, etc.

And in as mochelle as a welle also,
At whiche many folk her water fecche,
Nedethe to have the larger mouthe ; right so
The largesse of a kyng mote ferther strecche,
Yf he of his estate eny thyng recche,
Than other mennes, for impotence
Strecchethe not so ferre as his influence.

Largesse is liberalité ycalled,
And liknede is to hem that ben free ;
But he that avaricious is, is thrallde
To money. A kyng mote algates flee
A chynches hert, for his honestee,
And for the profite, as I seide above,
Of his peple, yf he thynke wyne her love.

Proverb. xxij^o. Victoriam et honorem adquiret qui dat munera. Idem, Ne dicas amico tuo, vade et revertere, et cras dabo tibi, cum statim possis dare.

Victorie and honour he shalle hym purchace,
That is of yiftes free, but ware alway
That he not tarie and delay his grace,
Drive it not forthe unto another day ;
Whan hym luste anone he yeve may,
Yeve it as blive, his thonke is wel the more ;
This vouche I, on holy scriptures lore.

Unde quidam, Qui cito dat, bis dat ; male dat qui munera tardat.

The vertu is of liberalitee,
Yeve and dispende in tyme and place due ;
Right as largesse dothe in suche degree,
They bothe mote in her conceites chue
Where is goode to yeve, and where to eschue,
The persone and the somme, and the cause why ;
What ye yeven, yeve it vertuously.

But it longethe not to the liberalle
To yeve hym goode that usethe flaterie ;
His menyng and his entencioun fynalle
On fals plesaunce it is for briberie.
He is the verray coffre of trecherie ;
His doublenesse his lorde overthrowethe ;
The sede of his confusioun he sowethe.

That man yborne is in a blissed houre
Whom that pitee, deserte, or kyndenesse,
Stiren to yeve or mynystre hym socoure,
That infortunes strokes bittirnesse
Ywounded hathe withe povertes sikenesse.
Nought yeve hem hire, and fees, and wages,
That han at the dice lost her heritages.

But tho that welthy men han be bifore,
And vertuous ben, and han her goode lost,
And kan not begge, to be dede therefore,
On hem fulle wele bystowede is the cost.
But, welaway, as harde as is a post,
A post, nay, as a stone, ben hertes now !
Lordes, for shame ! what thyng eilethe yow ?

A gentille hert for to begge hathe shame,
His rody shamefastnesse dar not prey ;
Ye that of gentilnesse han stile and name,
Lete not your poore brethren by yow dey ;
See unto hem, thoughe they not speke or sey.
Is pitee fro yow fledde ? calle hir ageyn ;
For hir absence hathe many a goode man slayn.

Senek seithe, he hathe not that thyng for nought
That beyethe it, by speche or by prayere.
Ther is no thyng that is in the erthe wrought,
As he seithe, that is bought so dere ;
It stonde the streite, whan it shalle appere,
For it is voice of wrecchednesse and sorwe,
Whan a man shalle pray, or begge, or borwe.

Allas ! thoughe that a man discover and pleyne
To many a lorde of his mischevous myserie,
The lorde not deynethe understonde his peyne,
He settethe not therby a blakberie.
Welthe in the lordes saile blowethe fulle merie ;
But the nedy berethe his saile so lowe,
That no wynde of comfort may it blowe.

Of liberalitee yit ferthermore
I telle wole, as that I have herd seyne
Amonge wise folke, gone is fulle yore.
What man a leder is or a chiefteyne
Of peple, his labour is alle waste and veyne,
But he be free unto his souldiours,
Yf that he seeke conquest or honours.

And specially that he her duetee
Abregge not, ne not syncope her wages
That hem assigned ben in certayntee ;
Perelle and shame folowen suche usages.
Whan alle accountede is, the avauntages
That foundede ben of wrong and reproof
Ben not but avauntages of myscheef.

This makethe covetise or avarice
Roote of alle harmes, for to conscience
Of wikked purchace is she emperice,
And mochel hathe, and ay hathe indigence.
She rather wille live in abstinence
Of mete and drynke, for hertes skantnesse,
Than for the soule or bodyes holsomnesse.

Prince excellent, so mote ye werk and wille,
As may your soules helthe edifie ;
And amonge alle other thynges, that your wille
Be not effect withe no wrecched chyncherie.
Largesse mesurable unto you tye,
And foole largesse voidethe from you clene ;
For free largesse is a vertuous mene.

AND, gracious prynce, like it you to wite
That touche I thynke of a kynges prudence,
As that I fynde in bookes write.
Prudence is called witte and sapience,
And nedes mote roial magnificence
Be prudent, as the scripture us lerethe,
Yf he shalle be as his estate requerethe.

Prudence and temperance, strengthe and ryght,
Tho foure ben vertues principalle.
Prudence gothe before, and yevethe light
Of counceille, what the other thre do shalle,
That they may wirke, be it grete or smalle,
After her rede, without whom no man
As unto God ne the world live kan.

Prudence is vertu of entendement ;
She makethe man by resoun hym governe.
Who so that luste be wise and prudent,
And the light folwe of hir lanterne,
He most cast his looke in every herne
Of thynges past, and that ben, and shulle be ;
The ende seethe and eke mesurethe she.

There is no wight that she shapethe to deceyve ;
And, thoughe men casten hem hir to begile,
Nought wole it be, by witte she wole it weyve.
Eke she observethe so wele trouthes stile,
And therto so wele kan hir tung file,
That, lest the favour of frenships corde,
Other than trouthe kan she not recorde.

She behotethe by goode avisement,
And yevethe more than hir luste promytte.
She yevethe to men eke comaundement
Not in fortune truste, nor by hir sette ;
And alle the trust out of her hert shette
Of myght, of worldly domynacioun ;
Vertu gyethe hir operacioun.

Prudence hathe lever loved be than dradde.
There may no prince in his estate endure,
Ne therin ony while endure sadde,
But he be loved, or love his armure
Of seurtee. O, take on you the cure,
Excellent prynce, love to embrace,
And than your hert is sette in siker place.

Now yf that ye graunte by your patent
To your servauntes a yerely guerdoun,
Crist shilde that your wille or your entent
Be sette to make a retraccioun
Of payement; for that condicioun
Exilethe the peples benevolence,
And kyndlethe hate undir privé silence.

Bethe wele avised, or your graunte outgo,
How ye that charge may perfourme and bere
Whan it is past; observe it wele also,
For elles it wole you anoye and dere.
For your honour moche better it were
No graunt to make at alle, than that your graunt
You preeve a breker of covenaut.

He that is loved, men hym offende;
But he that dradde and not beloved is,
As Tullius seithe, lightly may descende,
And the worthyshippe lese that was his.
And Senek seithe also, touchyng this,
The soget hatethe whom he hathe in drede;
And hate is harde, yf he his venyme shede.

Was never drede yet a goode wardeyne
To holde lordshippe in his sikirnesse,
But onely love is thyng most sovereyne ;
Love is norice of welthe and of gladnesse ;
But out of love spryngethe ferefulnesse,
And fere is goode that on love hym groundethe,
But other fere not helethe, but woundethe.

Love without a gode governaile
A kyng hathe none ; for, thoughe men no worde sey,
Yf he his peple oppresse, it is no faile
They love hym not in no maner wey.
They may his heste outwarde wele obey,
But in her hertes is smalle obeisaunce,
And unto God they compleyne her grevaunce.

And suche a kyng is not prudent ne wise,
That of his people purchacethe hym hate ;
For love exceedethe alle tresour in prise,
So that it be, and be wole algate.
When that richesces ebben and abate,
Yf love endure, it may hym restore,
And love is goten by prudences lore.

By wise counseille sette your hye estate
In suche an ordre as ye live may
Of your goode propre, in reule moderate.
Is it knyghtly to live on rapyne ? nay.
For Cristes sake, so you gyethe ay,
As that may strecche unto your peples ese,
And therwithealle ye shalle God hyely plese.

Egidius in ija
parte j. li. poli-
ticorum Aristo-
tilis, cum expo-
sicione Burley.
Ad regem max-
ime spectat ut
sit rex secun-
dum rei verita-
tem, etc.

It appertenethe a kyng for to be
A kyng in verray sothe and existence.
A kyng of office and of dignitee
The name is; he mote done his diligence
His peple for to gye by prudence;
For that he reule hem shulde duely,
The stile of a kyng he berethe certainly.

Eodem cº. Sicut
sagittator non
potest sagittam
sufficienter diri-
gere in signum,
nisi ipsum sig-
num viderit, sic
nec rex, etc.

As an archer may not his arwe shete
Even at a mark, but he the mark see;
Nomore may a kyng, I you behete,
Governe his peple in right and equitee,
But by prudence he reule his degree;
Yf that he wele, his peple han sikirnesse
Of rest and pees, welthe, joy, and gladnesse.

Inicium sapien-
cie timor Do-
mini.

Begynnyng of wisdom is God for to drede.
What kyng that dredethe that is goode and juste
To his peple; bethe suche, my lorde, I rede,
In love and awe of God ficchethe your luste;
Than ben ye wise, and than ye nedes muste,
After your worldly septre transitorie,
In heven regne in perpetuelle glorie.

To trete now purpose I how to a kyng
It nedefulle is to do by counseile ay;
Withouten whiche goode is hym do no thyng.
For a kyng is but a man soole perfay,
And be his witte never so goode, he may
Erre and mystake hym otherwhile amonge;
Where as goode counseile may exclude alle wrong.

Excellent prince, in axying of rede,
 Discover not your wille in no manere;
 What that ye thynke to do, lete it be dede,
 As for the tyme, lete no worde appere;
 But what every man seithe, herken wele and here.
 And yit whan goode counseile is yoven yow,
 What ye do wole, kepe it cloos ynow.

Wil it like you to perfourme it in dede,
 And yf it shalle be do, lete it not tarie;
 For that is perilous withouten drede.
 Ther is no thyng may make a lande myscarie
 More than suche delay; fulle necessarie
 It is a gode purpos perfourme as blive,
 And that ye not out of mynde it drive.

And yf that a man of symple degree,
 Or poore of birthe, or yonge be, goode counseile
 Yow yeve, admytte his resoun and take it in gree.
 Why nat, my goode lorde? what shulde you eile?
 But men done not so, wherof I merveile;
 The worlde favourethe ay the riches sawe,
 Thoughe that his counseile be not worth an hawe.

Ecclesiastici
 xiiij°. Dives
 locutus est, et
 omnes tacue-
 runt, et verbum
 illius usque ad
 nubes perdu-
 cunt; pauper
 locutus est, et
 dicunt, Quis est
 hic? etc.

What he seithe is up to the cloudes bore;
 But and the poore speke worthe the twey,
 His sede not spryng may, it is but lore,
 They seyne, "What is he, this? lete hym go pley."
 O worthy prynce, beth wele ware, I pray,
 That your hye dignitee and sadde prudence
 No disdeyne have of the poores sentence.

Thoughe men contrarie eke your oppynyoun,
They may percaas counceile you the best ;
Also ye ben at your owen eleccioun
To do or leve, as your self lest.
If it be goode, ympresse it in your chest
Of your memorie, and execute itte ;
If it be nought, to leve it is a witte.

And yf you list your conceilour to preeve,
Ye feyne mote ye han necessitee
Of golde, and yf he stire you and meeve
Your jewels ley in wedde, certein he
Lovethe your estate and prosperitee ;
But he that redethe you your peple to oppresse,
He hatethe you, certeyn, it is no lesse.

And yf a man, in tyme of suche a nede,
Of his goode yeve you a gode substaunce,
Suche men cherisshethe, and elles God forbede,
Kunnethe hym thanke of his goode chevysaunce.
For hym lever is to suffre penaunce
Hym self, than that your peple shulde smert,
There is a preef of trewe lovyng hert.

In axyng eke of rede, ware of favelle ;
Also be ware of the avaricious ;
For none of the two kan counceille welle,
Her rede and counceile is envenymous.
They bothe ben of gold so desirous,
They rekke not what brike her lorde be ynne,
So that they may gold and silver wyne.

And yf that your counceile that ye have take
 Unto the knowleche or the audience
 Of your foes come be, than lete it slake,
 And witterly putte it in abstinence.
 For to execute it it were grete prudence,
 In suche a caas it is wisdom to chaunge;
 Gode is that your counceile be to your foes straunge.

Counceile may wele be likened to a bridelle,
 Whiche that an hors kepeth up fro fallyng,
 If man do by counceile; but alle in ydelle
 His rede is yf man not folwe it in wirkyng.
 Do no thyng redeles, do by counceilyng
 Of hedes wise, and than no repentaunce
 Ther folwe you shalle in your governaunce.

Scriptum est,
 Sine consilio
 nichil facias, et
 post factum non
 penitebis, etc.

Thobie iijto. Con-
 silium semper a
 sapiente perquire,
 et non a fatuis.
 Scriptum est, Cum
 fatuis non habeas
 consilium, quia
 non possunt dili-
 gere nisi que eis
 placent.
 Thobie iijto.
 Omnia consilia
 tua in Deo perma-
 neant.
 Scriptum est, Cum
 bonis fac tuum
 consilium, non
 cum impiis, etc.

Comendable is counseile taken of the wise,
 And not of fooles, for they may not love
 But suche thyng as hem likethe in alle wise.
 Your counceillour cheseth our Lorde God above,
 Cheseth eke gode men, and away shove
 The wikkede, whos counceile is deceyvable;
 Thus biddeth holy writte, it is no fable.

3o R. 12o. Ad
 Roboam dixerunt
 juvenes qui nutriti
 erant cum eo, sic
 loqueris ad eos,
 minimus digitus
 meus est grossior
 dorso patris mei,
 et nunc pater
 meus posuit super
 vos jugum grave,
 ego autem addam
 super jugum
 vestrum; pater
 meus cecidit vos
 flagellis, ego
 autem cedam vos
 scorpionibus, etc.

Cheseth men eke of olde experience,
 Her witte and intellect is glorious;
 Of her counceile holsom is the sentence.
 The olde mannes rede is fructuous;
 Be ware of yong counceile, it is perilous,
 Roboame fonde it so, whan he forsoke
 Olde counceile, and to yong hym toke.

The entent wote I wele of the yong man
 As lovyng is and trewe as of the olde,
 Thoughe that he nat so wele counceile kan.
 Yong men strong ben, hardy, and bolde,
 And more weldy to fight, yf they sholde;
 But aske the olde in the tyme of pees and werre
 Rede and counceile, it shalle not be the werre.

He that is fresshe and lusty now this day,
 By lengthe of yeres shalle no thyng be so;
 Fresshnesse and luste may not endure alway,
 Whan age is come, he comaundethe ho.
 But lete see, who considerethe this, who?
 Goode is that age sette in governaile,
 And youthe it sue, thus it may availe.

Mandatum est,
 Sabbata sanctifi-
 ces.

Excellent prince, eke on the holydayes
 Bethe ware that ye not your counceiles holde;
 As for the tyme putte hem in delayes;
 Thynkethe wele this, ye wel apaide be nolde
 Yf your sogettes not by your hest tolde,
 Right so our Lorde God, kyng and comaundour
 Of kynges alle, is wrothe withe that errour.

In the longe yere ben werkdayes ynowe,
 If they be wele spent, for to entende
 To counceiles; to God your hert bowe,
 If ye desire men her hertes bende
 To you; what kyng not dredethe God offende,
 Ne not rekkethe do hym disobeisance,
 He shalle be disobeyede eke perchaunce.

The first fynder of our faire langage
 Hathe seide in cas semblable, and other mo,
 So hyely wele, that it is my dotage
 For to expresse or touche ony of tho.
 Allas ! my father fro the worlde is go,
 My worthy maister Chaucers, hym I mene ;
 Be thou advocate for hym, heven quene.

As thou wele knowest, blissede virgyne,
 Withe lovyng hert and hye devocioun
 In thyne honour he wrote fulle many a stile ;
 O now thyne helpe and thy promocion,
 To God thy sone make a mocioun
 How he thy servaunt was, maide Marie,
 And lete his soule floure and fructifie.

Chaucers
 ymage.

Althoughe his lyfe queynte be, the resemblaunce
 Of hym hathe in me so fresshe livelynesse,
 That to putte other men in remembraunce
 Of his persone I have here the liknesse
 Do make to this ende in sothefastnesse,
 That they that have of hym lost thought and mynde,
 By this peynture may ageyn hym fynde.

The ymages that in the chirches ben
 Maken folk thynke on God and on his seyntes,
 Whan they the ymages beholden and seen,
 Wher as unsight of hem causethe restreintes
 Of thoughtes goode ; whan a thyng depeynt is
 Or entailede, yf men taken of it hede,
 Thought of the liknesse it wole in hem brede.

Yit some holden oppynyoun and sey
 That none ymages shulde ymakede be.
 They erren foule, and gone out of the wey
 Of trouthe; han they skant sensibilitee.
 Passe over now, that blissede trinité
 Upone my maisters soule mercy have,
 For hym, lady, eke thy mercy I crave.

More other thyng wolde I fayne speke and touche
 Here in this booke, but suche is my dulnesse,
 For that alle voide and empty is my pouche,
 That alle my luste is queynt withe hevynesse.
 An hevy spirite commaundethe stilnesse,
 And have I spoke of peis, I shalle be stille;
 God sende us pees, yf it be his wille!

Scriptum est,
 Qui amplectitur
 pacem in mentis
 hospicio man-
 sionem preparat
 Christo, etc.

TOUCHE I wole here of pees a word or two,
 As the scriptures maken mensioun;
 And than my booke is endede alle and do.
 To Criste ordeynethe he a mansioun,
 Whiche in his hertes habitacioun
 Embracethe pees; where pees is, Criste is there,
 For Criste not luste abide elleswhere.

Amonge cristen folk, wrecche is he none
 That pacyently suffrethe a duresse;
 But sikirly a wrecche is he one
 That makethe strife, and hym suethe gladnesse,
 Whiche that of pees counceilethe the swetnesse.
 Our pees also and concorde brothirly
 Is sacrifice to God Almyghty.

Thynges that leden men to pees ben thre :
 Confourmyng to God in our self humblesse,
 And withe our neighbours tranquillitee.
 First sey I that we mote our willes dresse,
 And hem confourmen alle more and lesse
 To Goddes wille ; alle thyng is in his myght,
 Save onely that he may do none unright.

Even as a man is ever in werre and strife
 That bisiethe hym withstande a man whiche he
 Not may ; right so hath he pesible lyfe
 Contynuelly whos willes fully be
 To Goddes wille confourmyng ; o pardee,
 Agein God helpethe there no resistence,
 So stronge and myghty is his residence.

Job iiiij^{to}. Quis
 resistit Deo et
 pacem habuit ?
 quasi diceret
 nullus.

Humylitee to pees eke may men lede ;
 Men sey two grete may eville in o sak ;
 But symple humblesse is of suche godlyhede,
 That she of troubylly hate hathe no smak ;
 She stryvethe not, of discorde hathe she lak,
 She voide and empty is of crueltee.
 Humble spirite desirethe unitee.

The thirde is eke tranquillitee of thought,
 That gidethe man to pees ; for as a wight
 May in a bedde of thornes rest nought,
 Right so he that is withe grevous thoughtes twight
 May with hym self nor othir folk aright
 Have no pees ; a man mote nedes smert,
 Whan irous thoughtes occupieth his hert.

Scriptum est,
In pace factus
est locus ejus.
Est enim pax
mala que est
vere paci con-
traria, et hoc est
quando corda
sunt in malo
concordancia.
Talem pacem
habuit Pilatus
cum Herode,
etc.
De tali pace
loquitur psalmi-
sta, Zelam super
iniquos pacem
peccatorum
videns, etc.

And even as upone a pilwe softe
Man may hym rest wele, and take his ese,
Right so that lorde that sitte in heven alofte,
Hert pesible kan so like and plese,
That he wole entre therin, and it sese,
And occupie it as juste possessour ;
In place of pees restethe our Savyour.

But alle another pees ther is also,
Whiche is nought worthe, it is envenymous,
For it is unto verray pees a foo,
Whan men in a purpose malicious
Accorden, that pees is to God grevous ;
Suche pees was betwixte Herodes and Pilate,
And in suche cas pees is wers than debate.

A feyned pees eke is to pees verray
Foo, and suche was the pees of Judas,
Kissyng Crist ; Lorde, whether that this day
Any suche pees used is as that was ?
Ye, so I drede me, by seint Thomas ;
The cosse of Judas is now wide spradde ;
Tokens of pees ben, but smalle love is hadde.

Men counterfeten in wordes Tullius,
And folwe in werk Judas, or Guenyloun.
Many an hony worde and many a cus
Ther is, but waite on the conclusioun,
And preve galle, alle turnethe up-so-doune ;
There levethe nought of pees but countenaunce,
For alle the peyntede chere and daliaunce.

De tali pace
loquitur psal-
mista, Qui
loquitur pacem
cum proximo
suo, etc.

There is also a pees inordinate,
 Whan the gretter obeye to the lesse ;
 As thus, whan to his soget a prelate
 Obeyethe, and whan resoun the blyndnesse
 Suethe of sensualitees madnesse,
 Obeying it, alle soche pees is haynous,
 For it is to God pees contrarious.

Right suche a pees Adam hade withe Eve,
 Whan that he unto hir desire obeide ;
 He was percas adredde for to greve,
 Wherefore he did as that she hym seide.
 In that obedience he foleide,
 For God hir hym toke hym to obey ;
 But I adredde am, that I thus ferre sey.

Contra talem
 pacem loquitur
 Christus M^t x^o.
 Non veni, inquit,
 pacem mittere,
 sed gladium.

Yf that this come unto audience
 Of wommen, I sure am I shalle be shent,
 For that I touche of suche obedience,
 Many a browe shalle on me be bent.
 They wolden waite to be equipolent,
 And somewhat more, unto her husbondes ;
 And some men seyne suche usage in this londe is.

And yit no wonder is, as seemethe me,
 Whan I me bethought have alle aboute,
 Thoughe that wommen desiren sovereyntee,
 And her husbondes make to hem loute ;
 They made were of a rybbe, it is no doute,
 Whiche more stronge is and substancialle
 Than slyme of erthe, and clenner therwithealle.

Genesis ij^o.
 Mulier facta
 fuit de costa
 Ade, homo vero
 de limo terre,
 etc.

Wherefore it seemethe that the worthynesse
 Of wommen passethe mennes certeyn ;
 And yit som nyce men of lewdenesse
 In reproof of hem holden there ageyne,
 For croked was the rybbe, and speke and seyne
 That alle croked is her curtesye ;
 But agein that strongly wole I replye.

Secundum
 omnes philoso-
 phos figura cir-
 cularis est per-
 fectissima figu-
 ra, et significat
 in geometria
 unitatem.

For in the writyng and in the scripture
 Of filosofres men may see and rede,
 Cerclelyk shappe is most perfite figure,
 Betokenyng in gemetrie onehede ;
 And crokednesse a part is that may lede
 Somwhat unto a sercle or a compas ;
 What so men seyne, wommen stonde in goode cas.

For therby shewethe it, that crokidnesse
 Strecchethe unto the gretter perfeccioun
 Than dothe a thyng that is of evennesse ;
 Of this helpethe no contradiccoun,
 For it sothe is, it is no ficcioun,
 Every perfite body that man kan neven,
 Is rounde and crokede, and not streight ne even.

Begynne first at heven, and rounde it is ;
 The sonne and mone and sterres also ;
 Hede of man, yen, mouthe, and hert ywis,
 Ben alle rounde, and other ben there mo
 Than I expresse as now, but, or I go,
 Yit shalle I bette wommans part sustene ;
 So biddethe pees, and that to folwe I mene.

Mulier formata
fuit in paradiso,
homo vero in
agro Damas-
ceno, qui locus
est extra para-
disum, etc.

Now for to speke or touche of that place
In whiche that man and womman fourmed were :
Almyghty God to womman shope suche grace,
That she was fourmed in the worthiere,
In paradys men wote wele he made hir ;
But man ymade was out of paradys,
In place of lesse worthynesse and pris.

And of the maner of formacioun
Of bothe two, herkenethe now wele, I prey ;
The token or the significacioun
Of makyng of Adam may by no wey
Strecche to so parfite a good, as I sey,
As did the formacioun of Eve ;
And that as swithe here I shalle yt preve.

Secundum Au-
gustinum et
omnes doctores
catholicos, forma-
cio Eve significa-
vit formationem
ecclesie et sacra-
mentorum ejus.
Nam sicut Adam
dormiente forma-
batur Eva, et
membra ejus de
latere ipsius Ade,
sic Christo dor-
miente in cruce,
formabatur de la-
tere ejus ecclesia
et ejus sacra-
menta.

For more have I for her partie yit.
Makyng of Eve tokenede the makyng
Of holy chirche, and sacramentes of it ;
As of the side of Adam hym slepyng
Eve was made, so our Lorde Crist dying
Upon the crosse, holy chirche of his side
And the sacramentes made were in that tide.

Beatus Bernardus
dicit, A tempore
quo Christus erat
duodenus usque
ad annum xxxm.
fuit cum matre
sua, serviens ei in
omnibus que sibi
scivit placitura, eo
quod ad hoc ve-
nerat in mundum,
ut doceret veram
humilitatem, etc.

Fro tyme eke Crist was twelve yere of age
Unto thritty, he withe his moder ay
Was servyng hir, with plesaunt corage ;
To teche humylitee, he toke the way
Fro heven hider, and mekenesse verray
Taught he the most partie of his life,
While he was withe his moder and his wyfe.

For she was bothe two, and sithen she hadde
 So longe of hir husbonde the maistrie,
 Wommen I trowe ben not now so madde
 That style to forgo; nay suche folye
 What man that kan in a womman espye,
 Is worthy to be shryned, but God save hem alle,
 And graunte her hye corage not to palle.

Holy writte seithe, yf womman sovereyntee
 Of her husbondes have, how that they
 Unto her husbondes contrarious be;
 The tixt is suche, I wote wele, but what they,
 That tixte I understonde thus alwey,
 Whan that husbondes hem mystake and erre.
 Ageyn that vice wives maken werre.

*Ecclesiastici
 xxv°. Mulier si
 primatum ha-
 beat, contraria
 est viro suo.*

Thoughe a womman hir husbonde contrarie
 In his oppynyoun erroneous,
 Shalle men for that deeme hir his adversarie?
 Strawe! be he never so outrageous,
 Yf he and she shalle dwelle in one hous,
 Goode is he suffre, therby pees may spryng;
 Husbondes pees is pesible suffryng.

By concorde, smale thynges multiplien;
 And by discorde, hate, ire, and rancour,
 Perisshen thynges grete, and waste, and dyen.
 Pees hathe the fruyte, ese in his favour;
 To gete pees holsom is the labour,
 And kepe it wele, whan that a man hathe it caught,
 That ire ne discorde banysshe it nought.

In terra pax
hominibus, etc.

How plesaunt to God is of pees the myrthe,
What delyte eke in pees and unyoune,
The prince of pees hathe shewede in his birthe,
By aungels delytable songe and soun;e;
Also after his resurreccioun,
He pees bade, and whan he to heven sty,
He lefte pees in erthe truly.

Beati pacifici,
quoniam filii
Dei vocabuntur.

That yift of pees, that precious jewelle,
Yf men it kepe, and do it not away,
Sones of Crist they may be clept fulle welle.
But stryfe, that moche is to the fendes pay,
Amonge us fervent is, so welaway!
We cristen folk, what within and withoute,
Have so grete stryfe, that ther may no pees route.

The ryot that hathe ben withyn this lande
Amonge our self fulle many wyntres space,
Hathe to the swerde putte many a thousande.
The gredy hert, that wolde alle embrace,
Withe irous wille, and crabbed pale face,
And swepir fendly and stroke vengeable,
Hathe many a womman made clothede in sable.

This is no doute, that ambicioun
And covetise firethe alle this debate;
Tho two ben of wikked condicioun,
No wight holt hym content of his estate.
Every man willethe to ben exaltate,
Thoughe he be grete, yit hier wolde he go;
And thise ben causes of our stryfe and wo.

Werre withein our self is most harmefulle,
And perilous, and moste is ageyn kynde.
Therwithe this londe hath wrestlede many a pulle,
The smert is suche it may not out of mynde;
For it hathe cast our welthe fer behynde,
And ferther wole, but the werres stynte;
No goode may come of werres wrathfulle dynte.

Whiles that Romayns were in hert alle one,
And undevided alle hole stode, they were
Lordes of alle the worlde, for was ther none
Outwarde, as who seithe, myght hem greve or dere;
But alle save welthe may men suffre and bere.
Withein him self spronge suche divisioun,
That it hem brought to confusion.

What causede her inwarde werre and murmur
But avarice? she refte hem her wele.
Whiles they hade in cheertee and favour
Profite comon, they hade by the stele
Prosperitee, but it away gan stele
Whan they hem drowe to profite syngulere,
And of profite comon not weren chere.

Beholde how avarice crepethe in,
And kyndlethe werre, and quenchethe unytee.
O favelle, thou myght be of hir kyn,
For suche a breke-pees as is she,
Right suche another may I name the;
Thou rekkest not ne dredest not to wende
For mukke to helle into the ferrest ende.

This favelle is of pees a distourbour,
Bitwene God and mannes soule he werre reisethe ;
This worlde is blent by this dissymylour ;
Vertu he blamethe, and vices he preisethe ;
Sore in the bowe of trecherie he teisethe ;
His shot is gay, but his eye venymede ;
His fikel art may not aright be rymede.

Vertuous trouthe, hide thou thyne hede,
Thou maist as wele, thyne arte may not availe ;
Out of this worldes grace art thou as dede.
But favelle, traytour, thy fals governaile
Makethe fulle many shippes to saile
Into thy coffre, warme is thyne office ;
That trouthe lesethe wyne kan thy vice.

Allas ! so many a worthy clerk famous
In Oxenforde, and in Cambrigge also,
Stonde unavauncede, where as the vicious
Favelle hathe chirches and prebendes mo
Than God is plesede withe ; alas ! of tho
That wernen vertu so to be promotede ;
And they helples in whom vertu is rootede.

The knyght or squier on that other side,
Or the man that hathe in pees or in werres
Dispent with his lorde his bloode, but he hide
The trouthe and cory favelle, he not the ner is
His lordes grace, and untrouthe fulle ferre is
From hym, that worthy corage hathe honourede ;
Grace of his lorde by favelle is devourede.

Now to my mater of werre inwarde
Resorte I; but to seeke stories olde
No nede is, syn this day sharpe werre and harde
Is at the dore here, as men may beholde.
Fraunce, no wonder is thoughe thyne hert colde,
And brenne also, sithen suche is thyne agonye,
Thy self manacethe thy self for to dye.

Thy self destroye, and feble is thy victorie;
Thou hast in thy self stryven ofte or now,
And hast apesede alle, have in memorie
Thurghe thy prudence wost thou not wele how
Slaughtre is defendede, and not rekkest thou
To rebelle agein God, that it forbedethe;
For the myne hevy gost besily dredethe.

What eny part offendede hathe to other,
Redresse it faire and charitably,
By lawe of God, ye ben other brother.
O now adayes is none enemy
Like one that is to other of bloode ny;
Beware, correcte it, lest men of you sey,
Loo! whilom this was Fraunce of hye nobley.

I am an Englisshe man, and am thy foo,
For thou a foo art to my lygeaunce;
And yit myne hert stuffed is withe wo,
To see thyne unkyndely disseveraunce;
Accordethe you, gurdethe you withe suffraunce;
Ye greven God, and your self harme and shame,
And your foes therof han disporte and game.

Allas ! also the grete dissencioun,
The pitous harme, the hatefulle discorde,
That hathe endurede bitwene this regioun
And other landes cristen ! he that lorde
Of remes alle is, the actour of concorde
And pees, therwithe sore is meved, but we
Not dreden for to offende his majestee.

Of France and Engelande o cristen princes,
Sithen that your stile of worthynesse is ronge
Thurgheout the worlde in alle the provynces,
If that of you myght be radde or songe
That ye were one in hert, there is no tonge
That myght expresse how profitable and goode
Unto the peple it were of cristen bloode.

Yeve hem ensample, ye ben her myrroures,
They folwe you, what sorwe lamentable
Is caused of your werres sharp shours
There wote no wight, it is irreparable.
O noble cristen princes honorable,
For hym that suffrede for you passioun,
Of cristen bloode have compassioun.

Allas ! what peple hathe your werre slayne !
What cornes wastede, and doune trode and shent !
How many a wyfe and maide hathe be forlayne,
Castels doune bete, and tymbred houses brent
And drawen doune, and alle totore and rent !
The harme ne may not rekened be ne tolde ;
This werre wexethe alle to hore and olde.

To wyne worldeley tresour and richesse
Is of your stryfe your longe contynuançe ;
Wherby it seemethe ye have scantenesse
Of goode, or ye kun have no suffisance
Of plentee; and yf there be abundance
In your coffres, and in your hertes nede,
Of lordes conceyte may it not procede.

Whan Alisaundre dede was, and in his grave,
And his toumbe of golde wrought fulle richely,
As kynges dignytee wole axe or crave,
Divers filosofres drowe hem ny
Therto, and as one of hem stode therby,
He seide thus, amonge the folkes alle,
“ Seethe suche a chaunce now newe is falle.

This Alisaundre made yisterday
Of golde his tresour, but golde makethe now
Tresour of hym, as ye beholde may.”
Another filosofre seide eke how
Alle this worlde yisterday was not ynow
To stoppen Alisaundres covetise,
And now thre elles of clothe hym do suffise.

O worthy prynces, to that now take hede,
As hardy dethe is you to assaile
As he did Alisaundre, whom in drede
Hade alle this worlde; what myght his force availe
Ageyn the dethe? No thyng, saunz faile.
For thoughe that he swerde were of chyvalrie,
Dethe threwe hym to grounde, and lete hym lie.

Witheout grete labour, or withoute grete peyne,
 Men wyne goode, and to the worlde leve it shalle;
 Unto the pytte gothe not but the careyne,
 And thoughe golde were grave therwithe alle,
 Nought myght it helpe; bethe not goldes thralle,
 Sufficthe to your goode, ye prynces bothe,
 Withe pees and rest arme you and clothe.

Whan ye have stryven and foughten alle your fille,
 Pees folwe mote; but goode were it or than
 That pees were hade; what luste have ye to spille
 The bloode that Crist withe his bloode bought, whan
 He on the crosse starfe? O lady seint Anne,
 Thy doughter pray to beseche hir sone
 To stynte of werres the dampnable wone.

Liº iiiij^{to} Revela-
 cionum sancte
 Brigide, cº. cvº.
 Christus dicit,
 Si reges Francie
 et Anglie volu-
 erint habere
 pacem, ego
 dabo eis perpe-
 tuam pacem,
 sed pax vera
 non potest
 haberi nisi
 veritas et justi-
 cia diligantur.
 Ideo quia alter
 regum habet
 justiciam, placet
 michi quod per
 matrimonium
 fiat pax, et sic
 regnum ad
 legitimum he-
 redem poterit
 pervenire, etc.

The booke of revelacions of Bride
 Expresssethe how Crist thus seide hir unto,
 "I am pees verray, there I wole abide
 Where as pees is, none other wole I do.
 Of Fraunce and Engelande the kynges two,
 If they wole have pees, pees perpetuelle
 They shulle have;" thus hir booke seithe wote I welle.

"But verray pees may be hade by no way,
 But yf trouthe and justice loved be;
 And for that o kyng hathe right, ther may
 By matrymonye pees and unitee
 Ben hade, Cristes plesaunce is suche; thus he
 That right heir is may the reame rejoise,
 Cecyng alle strife, debate, werre, and noise."

Now sithen the wey is open, as ye see.
How pees to gete in vertuous manere,
For love of hym that dide upone the tree,
And of Marie, his blissfulle moder dere,
Folwethe that wey, and your strife ley on bere ;
Purchacethe pees by wey of mariage,
And ye therynne shulle fynde avauntage.

Now, pees, approche, and drive out werre and strife ;
Frenship appere, and bannysshe thou hate ;
Tranquillitee, thou reve ire hir lyfe,
That fervent is and leef to debate ;
Ye thre vertues, now lete see abate
The malice of the foule vices thre,
That verray foes ben to alle cristentee.

O CRISTEN princes, for the love and awe
Of hym that is kyng of kynges alle,
Softethe your hertes, and to pees you drawe ;
Considerethe what goode may therof falle.
The hony takethe, and levethe the galle ;
The steerne jugge in his juggement
May do but right for his punysshement.

What disobeisance and rebellioun,
What wille unbuxome, what unkyndenesse,
May he preeve in you that distruccioun
Done of men, his hondwerk sothely, I gesse,
It mote nede stire his rightwisnesse
Agein you, styntethe at his reverence,
Suethe his grace and his benevolence.

From hensforthe lete ther betwixt you be
So vertuous a lyfe, for Cristes sake,
That ye of love and pees and charitee
May be; lete your pitee now awake,
That hathe slept, and pees bitwene you make,
And on the foes of Crist your redemptour
Werrethe, there kithethe your vigour.

Upone the myscreauntes to make werre,
And hem to the feithe of Crist to bryng,
Goode werre therynne, may he no thyng erre,
That were a meritorie werreyng;
That is the wey to the conqueryng
Of heven blisse, that is endeles,
To whiche you bryng the actour of pees. Amen.

O LITELLE booke, who yafe the hardynesse
Thy wordes to pronounce in the presence
Of kynges impe and princes worthynesse,
Syn thou alle naked art of eloquence?
And why approchest thou his excellence
Unclothede, save thy kirtelle bare allone?
I am right sure his humble pacience
The yevethe hardynesse so to done.

But o thyng wote I wele, go where thou go,
I am so privé to thy sentence,
Thou hast and art and wolt ben evermo
To his hyennesse of suche benevolence,
Thoughe thou not do to hym due reverence
In wordes, thy cheerté not is the lesse;
And yf lust be, to his magnificence
Do by thy rede, his welthe it shalle witesse.

Beseche hym of his gracious noblesse
The holde excusede of thyne innocence
Of endityng ; and withe hertes mekenesse,
If ony thyng the passe of necligence,
Beseche hym of mercy and indulgence,
And that, for thy gode hert, he be not fo
To the that alle seest of loves fervence,
That knowethe he that no thyng is hidde fro.

NOTES.

- P. 1, l. 5. *At Chestres Inne*.—Chester's Inn stood in the Strand, on the eastern part of the site now occupied by Somerset House. It was perhaps a dependence on the larger establishment of the Middle Temple. See Mason's *Hoccleve*, p. 66.
- P. 2, l. 2. *Fortunes stroke*.—Alluding to the deposition of King Richard II.
- P. 11, l. 12. *As did a wrecche*.—This was John Badby, who was burnt in Smithfield in the month of March, 1410. See Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, vol. iii. p. 235, ed. of Rev. S. R. Cattley, 8vo. 1844.
- l. 22. *My lord the prince*.—Henry prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V., who was present at Badby's martyrdom.
- P. 16, l. 9. *in gownes of scarlet—twelve yardes wide, &c.*—This excess in apparel, derived from the fashions of the previous reign, was the subject of various sumptuary laws in the reign of Henry IV., but apparently without much effect. See Fairholt's *Costume in England*. This part of Occleve's poem is a curious illustration of contemporary costume.
- P. 17, l. 10. *in a mannes tippet*.—The tippet, in the male costume, was the cape or cloak thrown over the shoulder.
- l. 23. *I putte caas*.—The inconvenience here supposed to arise from superfluity of clothing is singularly characteristic of the age, when street frays between the great lords and their retainers seem to have been very common.
- P. 19, l. 15. *Of Lancastre duc Johan*.—John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster and father of Henry IV. It was from this prince, chiefly, that the house of Lancaster at first derived its popularity.

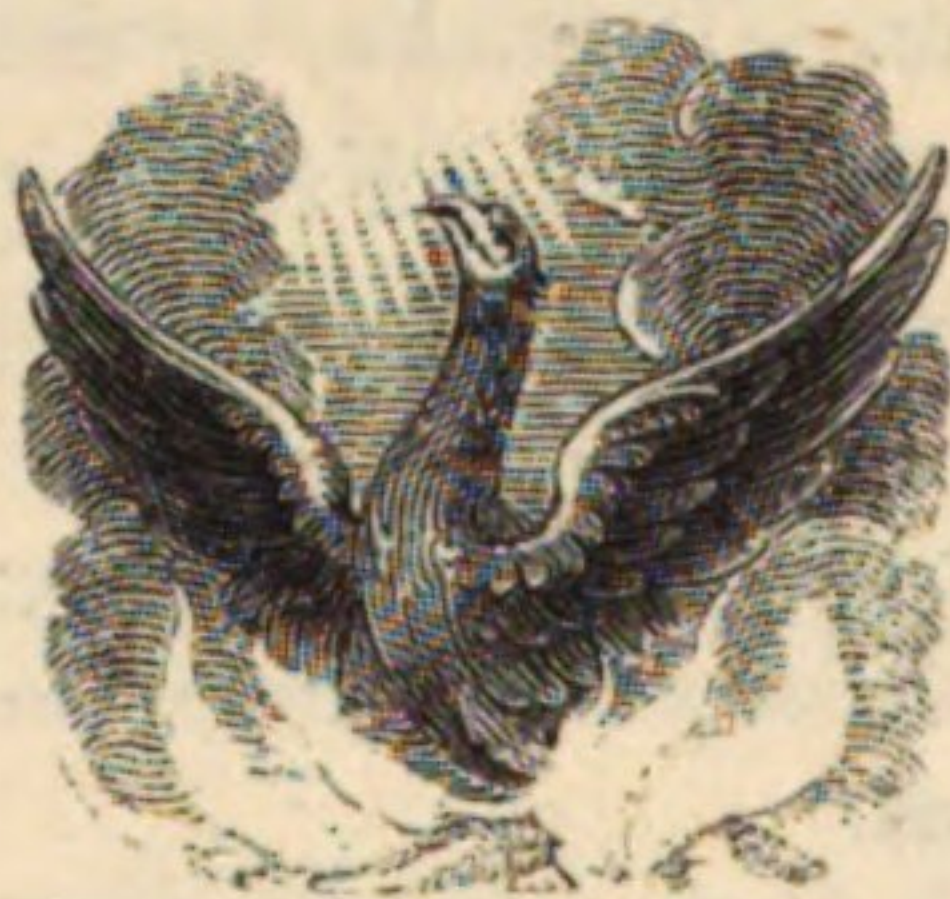
- P. 22, l. 19. *the leef-sele*.—The lattice, more usually written *levesele*. The tavern was distinguished by its lattice window, which was decked out in some way or other so as to attract customers.
- P. 25, l. 16. *crosse* or *crouche*.—A cross was usually placed on the reverse of our medieval coinage, and hence the word was often used as a familiar term for money, and was a frequent subject of puns.
- P. 47, l. 8. *chery feire*.—Cherry-fairs, which I believe are still held in Kent and Worcestershire, must have been very common and very popular in the middle ages, for they are frequently introduced by the poets as illustrations of the vain and transitory character of human life. See Halliwell's Dictionary of Archaic Words *in v*.
- P. 60, l. 16. *No lenger forster*, &c.—Ray gives this proverb under the form, "No longer foster, no longer friend," and explains or parallels it by the Spanish proverb, "El pan comido, la compañía desheca" (When the bread is eaten, farewell the company).
- P. 62, l. 24. *Lyre*.—Nicolaus de Lyra, the celebrated medieval commentator on the Scriptures.
- P. 71, l. 22. *eke maister Gower*.—Gower the poet died in 1402, and was buried in the church of St. Mary Overie in Southwark, now St. Saviour's, where his tomb is still preserved. Chaucer died in 1400.
- P. 72, l. 26. *at Carmes masse*.—The house and church of the Carmelites, or White Friars, stood on the south side of Fleet Street, between the Temple and Salisbury Court.
- P. 81, l. 26. *in cage*.—Cage was a common name for a close prison, which was literally a cage in the middle ages.
- P. 86, l. 11. *Dunne is in the myre*.—Dun was a name of a horse, and to draw Dun out of the mire was a name of a popular game. "Dun in the mire" became a proverbial phrase for to be in distress or embarrassment.
- P. 92, l. 15. *Edwarde the laste*.—Edward III. of course. It is curious that there are several stories in which king Edward is made to pass in disguise among his subjects, all more or less legendary, as might be supposed, but the statement in the text is a remarkable proof of the general belief in such tales. One of them is printed in Hartshorne's Ancient Metrical Tales, under the title of "A Tale of King Edward and the Shepherd."

- P. 95, l. 2. *Off Lancastre goode duk Herry*.—Henry, the first of the Plantagenets dukes of Lancaster, and father-in-law of John of Gaunt, one of the greatest men of the reign of Edward III.
- P. 112, l. 22. *A kyng of this londe*.—It is impossible to say to what king Occleve refers; but the easy granting, or rather the selling, of pardons for crimes by the crown was a common occurrence, and one of the great national grievances.
- P. 150, l. 17. *Johan of Canace*.—This story, under different forms, was a very common one in the middle ages. One version will be found in my Latin Stories, p. 28. It will be hardly necessary to remark that the story of King Lear and his daughters is another version.
- P. 156, l. 7. *her berdes shaved he*.—To make, or shave, the beard of any one, was a proverbial phrase, taken from the French (*faire la barbe à quelqu'un*), for to outwit him, to cheat him. It occurs more than once in Chaucer.

He seyde, "I trowe the clerkes ben aferd!
Yet can a meller *make a clerkes berd*,
For al his art.

Chaucer, Reeve's Tale.

- P. 193, l. 15. *The booke of revelacions of Bride*.—A book of prophetic Revelations, attributed to St. Brigitta, Brigida, or Bride (as the name was corrupted in popular language), had been published apparently not long before this time, and no doubt with a political aim.
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WESTMINSTER :

PRINTED BY J. B. NICHOLS AND SONS,

25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

Occleve, Thomas,

De regimine principum A poem by Thomas Occleve, written in the reign of
Henry IV. Edited for the first time by Thomas Wright

London 1860

Hbh/K 520-5

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10800463-5